

UPPER PERKIOMEN SCHOOL DISTRICT

2229 East Buck Road

Pennsburg PA 18073

Special Education & Pupil Services Committee Meeting

MINUTES

June 5, 2019 7:30 PM

CHAIR: Judy Maginnis

Ex-Officio: Dr. Kerry Drake, President

MEMBERS:

Melanie Cunningham

James Glackin

Acting Superintendent – Dr. Andrea Farina

Assistant Director of Special Education- Mrs. Christine McCloskey

In attendance: Judy Maginnis, Melanie Cunningham, Chris McCloskey, Allison Stephens, Kathy Metrick

AGENDA

Judy Maginnis made a call to order. Motion to approve April Committee Meeting minutes. Motion passed.

Meeting to review goals that were developed for the 18-19 school year to provide a report at the June board meeting. As the goals were discussed, a determination was made as to what will be done next year.

Special Education and Pupil Services Committee Meeting vision and mission was reviewed.

Strengths of 18-19 school year:

1. Investment in research based programming designed to improve academic outcomes. Chris M. said that we have been looking at academic and social and emotional health and have added the SMARTS curriculum, Systems 44, Read 180 and have 5 staff trained in the Wilson program. We will be looking further at what we can do to expand the needs of students who experience trauma. We have also seen well qualified applicants for impending positions and offer tuition reimbursement for current staff who want to expand their educational scope.

Weaknesses and gaps of 18-19 school year:

With George Reigle leaving in January, many of the goals and programs that were started or to be started didn't progress.

1. Added behavioral support. We are making strides towards that and looking at that as a goal for next year (i.e. addition of RBTs). Allie Stephens discusses the grant that was

awarded to implement the Second Step curriculum at the elementary level. This will provide teachers with classroom management strategies and Tier 1 interventions. Teachers will receive PD through the county and we will also be having a Train the Trainer training to support all staff district wide.

2. There is a need to work on disseminating more information on plans and procedures for providing supports. Teachers felt that what is in place isn't adequate, especially regarding MTSS. Teachers expressed that they are unclear as to how to use the referral process. Chris said that we will continue to use the resources provided by the MCIU and that we are looking to identify a MTSS coordinator at each building. One of the concerns was that the MTSS process was slow in identifying student needs and initiating more intense interventions. Judy posed the question to Chris about the feedback from teachers, has it gotten better or are they still uncomfortable? Chris replied that there are both, but that the key factor in making the process a success is data collection. Decisions are based on the data and what tiered interventions will be put into place. There have been times when a request for an evaluation comes through before data has been collected and tiered supports have been tried. We have continually been working on this process.

Formal recommendations:

1. Create a comprehensive and systematic procedure for benchmarking student performance across academics, behaviors and social skills. We are hoping that administration will develop and disseminate these to district staff by August. Strategic tiered interventions that are a uniform procedure for evaluating eligibility for special education or a 504. We are working on it, but we are not complete. Recommendation is to continue to develop it.
2. Prior to 18-19 school year there was PD on tiered interventions but teachers don't feel that was enough. Allie said that the PD did a great job joining together the academic and behavioral pieces of MTSS, but strategies to implement interventions wasn't provided. Teachers need a toolkit to deal with behaviors and we will look to provide that toolkit to help with behavior strategies. There are universal strategies that are school and class wide that we also need to set up. For example, the teacher standing outside the classroom greeting each student entering school for the day provides a connection and can set up the day. Teachers want to focus on special positive support, which was common response in the PD surveys.
3. One recommendation was restructuring the elementary MTSS process. Chris said it was evolving over the year but we do have a clear plan for next year. Having a point person, who will be defined over the summer, is one step. Dr. Farina will be overseeing Pupil Services moving forward. We are looking for a director of teaching and learning as well and both of those positions will work together to make sure there is a clear process and toolkits are provided.
4. Enhancing transition and expansion of activities for students with disabilities to prepare them with future readiness. How are we meeting the required transition activities (Act

339)? Allie stated that we were awarded a grant for Teacher in the Workplace. We will be sending a team of teachers out to workplaces in the community this summer and they will come back, look at their curriculum and integrate some things that they saw in the workplace that are skills necessary to be successful. We are also developing and outlining activities in our low incidence elementary classes that will tie in to the upper grades. We do provide artifacts for college and career readiness, which will translate into benchmarks for those students. Chris said she will ask Shane Thrush if he has any recommendations on changes for improving the transition program.

We have a good feel for what we need to work on for the upcoming year. No questions or comments were made.

The Meeting was adjourned.