

TRINITY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Minutes of the Education Committee Meeting  
Board Room, Trinity Hall  
10:00 a.m. – August 10, 2011

**Members of the Committee: Dennis McWreath (Chairperson); John Keisling; Dorothy Tecklenburg and JoAnn Standish**

Committee members present: Dennis McWreath, JoAnn Standish and Dorothy Tecklenburg

Board member present: Sandra Clutter, Henry Clemens, Ronald Harton and Tamara Salvatori

Others present: Paul T. Kasunich, Superintendent; Don Snoke, High School Principal; Pete Keruskin, Middle School Principal; Gloria Nalepka and Michelle Ostrosky, Elementary Principals; and Judy Walz, recording secretary.

Community members present were: Gordon Lowry, Mary Ann Berty, Megan Ross, Kate Karoleski, Frances Eates, and Diane Ecker

The meeting was called to order by Mr. McWreath, Chairperson, at 10:00 a.m. followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Mr. Snoke updated the committee on high school class tallies and course offerings, noting that the counselors were still updating courses with regard to failures and summer school students. He explained that classes showing low enrollment were running by “marrying” classes and offering them simultaneously, or by offering a course as an independent study. It was noted that reimbursement is no longer available for dual enrollment due to the state budget.

Mr. Keruskin reported on class sizes at the Middle School, indicating that final class sizes will be in the mid 20’s. He noted that the schedule presented was revised due to three middle school teachers being moved to the high school to accommodate needs of the district.

Mr. McWreath reviewed class sizes in the elementary buildings, indicating that grades 3 and 5 at Trinity North had been divided and that grades 1, 4 and 5 at South and grades 1 and 3 at East were of concern. He indicated that enrollment at Trinity West had decreased.

Frances Eates, North Franklin Township, questioned if there was a maximum number of students in a kindergarten class which would require splitting the class.

Mr. McWreath noted that a breakdown of special education students by exceptionality would be presented to the Board at its’ next meeting.

Dr. Kasunich reported on agreements with local universities for student teachers. He indicated that currently there is no cap on the number of student teachers the district accepts and noted that he would like to see tighter control over student teachers and interns.

Mr. McWreath discussed grade configuration in the buildings. He indicated that the issue would be added to the September board agenda for vote. Dr. Kasunich commented on the implementation of a 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade academy. Discussion was held regarding the benefits and disadvantages of configuring the schools as K-4, 5-7 and 8-12.

Diane Ecker, South Strabane Township, spoke in support of the current middle school configuration, citing social and emotional needs of students at that age.

Gordon Lowry indicated that he is not in favor of moving fifth grade to the middle school and noted that this configuration would allow for the closing of Trinity South due to low enrollment.

Mrs. Salvatori indicated her opinion that a community focus group should be established before any decision is made.

Frances Eates questioned who would administer grades 8 and 9 if they were both housed at the high school.

Mrs. Clutter spoke in support of moving fifth and eighth grades, which would result in small elementary class sizes and noted her confidence in the administration and staff to implement such a plan.

Mrs. Berty noted concerns regarding the social and psychological aspects of having eighth grade at the high school.

Mrs. Ecker requested that a questionnaire be distributed to parents for their input.

Mrs. Eates suggested that the board note the benefits of reconfiguring the grades when a plan is presented to the public.

Dr. Kasunich reported that a summary of A.P. testing would be presented to the Board at its next meeting. He noted that all students enrolled in A.P. courses are now required to take the test, which is paid for by the district. Discussion was held regarding the possibility of payment by parents and an alternative off-site location to administer the tests.

Dr. Kasunich updated the committee on the before/after school program now being offered by the YMCA at Trinity East. He indicated that the YMCA's decision to offer the program only at East was based on results of a parent interest survey. He also indicated that there are no plans to provide transportation from other elementary schools at this time.

Mrs. Tecklenburg discussed the I.B. (International Baccalaureate) program. She indicated that the cost to implement the program was enormous and it was her opinion that funds would be better used to increase the rigor of the current A.P. program.

Dr. Kasunich indicated that options for SAT prep classes would be offered, which would include classes during the school day, on-line and through Seneca Valley Cyber and that notification would go to parents with the information.

Mary Ann Berty noted that the Association would like to express concern for the need for a certified reading teacher at Trinity East

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.