

**WALTON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SHARED DECISION MAKING
MARCH 3, 2016**

5:02 PM Meeting Called To Order by Roger B. Clough II

Present: Roger B. Clough II, Chad Hall, Kelly Gates, Jennifer Wright, Thomas Maxwell, Greg Dale, Frank Ward, Mike Snider, Dr. Michelle Reed, Robert Knuschke, Lori Cetta, Eric Scofield, Mary Phraner, Lillian Browne.

No members of the public were present

CURRICULUM ISSUES

Dr. Michelle Reed presented issues related to curriculum.

Current course descriptions, as requested in our budget forum meeting, are largely done, and only await final edits and printing. Dr. Reed was asked if an addendum would be prepared for new courses to be offered for 2016-17, and Dr. Reed answered yes, it would be.

The new MS/HS homework policy was reviewed. Dr. Reed reminded everyone that the elementary homework policy has already been put in place.

Conversations are occurred with Broome Community College regarding expanded college credit offerings, both through the Fast Forward program and through attendance at Broome CC. Representatives from Broome CC will be coming to Walton on March 30 to continue this discussion.

A question was asked about utilizing Delhi College. Delhi College would cost more money than Broome Community College would.

Dr. Reed also discussed curriculum mapping, which is ongoing at all grade levels. Curriculum mapping is the process of describing instruction in different grade levels by describing what is being taught in each unit or topic, and describing the key concepts that are being conveyed by the instruction. The point of curriculum mapping is to make sure that we are properly instructing our children, to find gaps in our instruction that need to be remedied, and to find opportunities for connections between disciplines and grade levels. At this point, curriculum mapping is being done on a voluntary basis and many teachers have become involved.

GRADING

Dr. Reed stated that the next issue that would be addressed would be a grading policy.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

First, Mr. Knuschke reported about the MS/HS.

The new literacy blocks at the middle school are going well. All middle school students meet during the last period of the day and work through programs meant to improve literacy. The classes include a read aloud, a mini-lesson about literacy strategies or grammar, time for individual reading, and time for

journaling. The classes cycle through readings in Math, STEM, History, Sports, Arts, Music, and a “free” day. Mr. Knuschke indicated that this was an idea that originated from the teaching staff. Mr. Knuschke said that the literacy blocks were helping to improve literacy, improve time on task, reduce behavioral issues, provide AIS services, and help children develop positive behavioral habits (in particular, better reading habits).

The new literacy blocks are designed to be independent on a daily basis so that they do not interfere with Band and Orchestra that is offered at the same time and vice versa.

Mr. Knuschke also discussed new Math and ELA labs at the HS, and indicated that Geometry and Trigonometry Regents scores improved drastically. The exact scores are not yet available, but the increases were dramatic.

Staff development meetings at the HS/MS have focused on topics such as differentiated instruction, close reading, and response to intervention.

Building Level Team (BLT) meetings have also been instituted which include staff and parents in decision making processes.

Open Houses and parent/teacher conferences have been very productive, and efforts to increase attendance have increased participation in these events.

Mr. Knuschke also commented on the success of accelerated classes.

Secondly, Mr. Snider reported about Townsend Elementary School.

In the area of literacy, he spoke about efforts to increase close reading meant to help students develop text dependent answers. He also spoke about the Journeys text series, the reading levels in Journeys, and efforts to help students produce longer, more complex writing samples.

He also spoke about “text sets”, which are sets of books that introduce a concept and then increase the complexity of the concept with further books in the series. He showed the committee a set of books about teeth as an example.

In the area of Math, he spoke about the Go Math! Series and its use in improving math skills.

He also spoke about the new 5th Grade rotational blocks (ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies), where 5th grade math teachers are dividing their subject areas into blocks to provide students with more specialized instruction.

He also spoke about the curriculum committee, imagine learning, and efforts to improve the transition from elementary to the middle school. He used the example of using Journeys and Imagine Learning in the two schools, and the use of common leveling tests in both schools.

NEXT MEETING

It was decided to hold the next meeting of the Shared Decision Making Committee in the fall, when comparison data could be examined.

The meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.