

School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC)

February 8, 2017

4:30 – 6:00 pm

Attending:

Lana LaSalle	Mike Raso	Amy Swearingen
Richard Lynch	Phil Redington	Kaye Meyers
Kitka Galvin	Kathy Lowry	Stacey Struck
Celeste Miller	Michelle Tabares	
Barb Jordan	Julie Tropa	

District Update Mike Raso, Superintendent

- The district is working on a calendar for the 2017-2018 school year.
- Kindergarten Round-Up is on Thursday, March 2.
- There is a bill in motion in the Iowa legislature to rewrite the collective bargaining law for public employees.
- The state has allocated a 1.1% allowable growth to schools.
- Interviews for the Director of Finance are scheduled for next week.

Questions:

Are you working with the union on a multi-year contract? *Yes. The meeting regarding negotiations is February 9.*

Will the position of Assistant Superintendent be filled? *The job title is changing to Director of Curriculum and it will be filled.*

Topic Presentation – Parent, Community & Staff Engagement

Bettendorf High School - Colin Wikan, BHS Interim Associate Principal/Dean

The high school communicates information to parents using School Messenger and email. BHS maintains four Twitter accounts (principal, students, athletics, and Parent Pride) and a Facebook account. They also conduct parent surveys to gather input. The staff receives information through regular staff meetings, a reminder app, a Monday Memo from the principal. Each department has a team leader with regular meetings. Administrators visit the classrooms to observe. There is an administrator at each BHS event.

Questions:

Are you satisfied with the level of parent involvement? *So much of the information sent out and communication with parents takes place electronically. Face to face contact has decreased with the communication tools we utilize. There is not the need to be physically in the building to stay connected and be a partner in the student's education.*

What is the focus of the information on the Twitter accounts? *BHS maintains four Twitter accounts: principal, students, athletics, and Parent Pride. The information is what will impact each specific group.*

Bettendorf Middle School - Lisa Reid, BMS Principal

Middle School engages students through Project Based Learning (PBL) involving the students in solving real world problems, hands on learning, and connections with a real world audience. Students are also offered a wide variety of clubs, activities and sports. There is a Student Voice group and a Student Council. BMS also surveys their students for feedback.

The staff participates in PBL training sessions, the Teacher Leadership program which includes Model Teachers, and, along with the rest of the district, is establishing Professional Learning Communities (PLC). There are team leaders in each BMS House. The BMS administrators communicate to staff with staff meetings, email, surveys, newsletters, and through the BMS bulletin Board.

BMS has feels there is not enough parent involvement at their level and they are looking into ways to strengthen participation. As with the high school, so much communication is done electronically that a parents can stay involved and informed without coming into the school.

Comments:

Coming from the elementary to middle school, it is difficult to know who to contact because there is more than one teacher and a TA. A designated Parent liaison would be helpful.

Middle school students don't seem to want their parents involved.

Elementary - Lana LaSalle, Principal at Thomas Jefferson

Lana LaSalle spoke on behalf of all the elementary buildings. Parents have many opportunities to be involved in their schools. The elementaries hold an Unpack Your Backpack night with an ice cream social, District and building curriculum night, family Literacy nights at the Title 1 schools, and parent/teacher conferences. They utilize School Messenger, the website and newsletters to communicate. Teachers email and call parents as needed. They encourage Elementary parents to serve on various district committees such as Facilities, Calendar, and Strategic Plan. Just as the other levels, they use parent surveys to gather input.

The elementary buildings have very active PTO/PTAs which sponsor many community building activities throughout the school year, including family nights, restaurant fundraisers, book fairs, skate nights, and school carnivals.

Volunteers play an important role at the elementary level. All buildings track volunteer hours. Volunteers help in the kindergarten classrooms, listen to children read, and with field trips, class parties, and after school clubs.

The elementary level feels fortunate to have active parent and community involvement.

District staff engagement - Heather Stocking, Director of Human Resources

The district offers a Welcome Back in the beginning of the school year for all staff and an End of the Year Recognition ceremony and luncheon for all staff at the end of the year. There is a monthly newsletter, Employee of the Quarter recognition, and Superintendent STAR recognition. The administrators visit buildings and classrooms. Surveys are used for input. Recently a guest staff survey was sent out asking for input on how we can serve our guest staff and make them feel more connected. Recently a guest staff survey was sent out asking for input on how we can serve our guest staff and make them feel more connected.

Questions/Comments:

Highlight a guest teacher in newsletters.

Set up an award for volunteer/community recognition

Recognize companies that give back

Have interdisciplinary presentations.

English as a Second Language - Michele Tabares, ESL Coordinator

ESL focuses on students with language backgrounds other than English. The district works with the students and reaches out to the parents to help explain and acclimate them to American schools. ESL staff work with teachers to help them be mindful of cultural and religious differences. If needed, an interpreter is supplied for parent/teacher conferences.

Questions:

What tools are in place on a daily basis for teachers to reach out to parents? *The written word is the best way for teachers to communicate with ESL parents. We have also found that there is someone in almost every household that knows English.*

How many students are in the ESL program? *There are just under 60 students at this time, 40 families speaking 14 different languages.*

Outreach - Barb Jordan, Outreach Coordinator

Although the outreach program is for grades K-8, they are involved with students from infancy through grade 12. The open cases involve 100 families, between 230-250 children. There are 1 fulltime and 2 part time employees who work with a core team of professionals to receive referrals and make connections with those in need. The Outreach workers also serve on community organizations that provide support to children. Resources include the Silent Angel Network, Bettendorf Clothing Pantry, School Supply Drive, Camps, Fall Food Collection, Friday parent meetings, and Family Night Dinners.

How are the family night dinners funded? *The dinners were funded by the state but the state has taken that money away. The cost of the dinner is about \$85.00 per event.*

Curriculum and Professional Development (CPD) Teacher Leaders - Kaye Meyers, CPD Literacy

The District has 3 CPD Teacher Leaders, one for literacy, one for math and one for STEAM. The CPDs work together with administrators and teachers to build, analyze, and improve the curriculum and the assessments we use and to provide relevant professional development opportunities. The CPDs interact across buildings, content areas, and grade levels. They continually meet and communicate with teachers, work with the Instructional Coaches, and support the district PLC work.

Due to time constraints, Celeste Miller, Director of Communications, was not able to present on parent & community engagement. Officer Jim Bennett was not in attendance to present on the police liaison program.

Further questions/comments:

How do we encourage more shared elementary functions?

Can the district bring in speakers for staff, parents, and community presentations?

What are we doing to unify the district?

How can the district solve the "silo" issue?

There is frustration because parents don't know/understand how decisions are being made.

Can we get input from parents on a smaller scale?

How can we get more parent and community involvement on the district wide committees, such as SIAC?

Next SIAC meeting is April 12, 2017. Presentation topic will be what the district is currently doing to help create a safe learning environment for students and staff.