

# **Policy & Academic Affairs Committee**

Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2025

Time: 6:06 p.m. – 6:52 p.m.

Location: Via Zoom

## **Members Present**

- Amy Melchiorre
- Amanda Orzolek
- Ann Kostiuk
- JJ Cleaver
- Andrea Landis
- Cara Dunn
- Guy Moses
- Mary Rose Latorre
- Wendy Arnold
- Jessica Knapp and Lyndsey Sturkey from Communities in Schools PA (CISPA)

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m. by Amanda Orzolek. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. No public comment was received.

## **New Business**

### **Communities and Schools Introduction**

- Amy Melchiorre explains the roles of school counselors, mental health counselors, and prevention specialists within the district.
- Amy Melchiorre details the new Communities in Schools (CIS) roles in Memorial and the middle school, focusing on attendance issues and gaps in services.

### **Overview of Communities in Schools (CIS)**

- Jessica Knapp and Lyndsey Sturkey introduce themselves and explain their roles at CISPA

- Jessica Knapp mentions the importance of integrating CIS into the community and potential partnerships with local organizations.
- Amanda Orzolek asks about the timeline for setting goals and sharing them with the board, and Jessica Knapp explains the needs assessment process and annual school support plan.

## **Communication and Community Engagement**

- Amanda Orzolek inquires about how CIS will communicate with parents and the community, and Jessica Knapp suggests letters, meet-the-teacher nights, and open houses.
- JJ Cleaver highlights the challenges of reaching parents who can't read letters and suggests alternative communication methods as well such as robocalls.
- Ribbon-cutting celebration is planned - JJ to inform the press
- Amy Melchiorre discusses the creation of a document explaining the roles of different mental health professionals to clarify who parents should contact for various needs.
- Amanda asks Jessica how the Board can best support CISPA - Jessica needs contacts of community organizations for future fundraising and to partner locally with
- JJ Cleaver mentions an upcoming meeting at the Intermediate Unit (IU) to discuss the CIS program with other superintendents.
- Amy Melchiorre reminds the group the board needs to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CISPA

## **Project AWARE and Professional Development**

- Ann Kostiuk explains Project AWARE's role in connecting students with mental health providers and promoting professional development for staff.
- Wendy Arnold and Ann Kostiuk discuss the importance of building a toolbox of resources for adults to better support students.

## **Blended Program and Cyber Schools**

- JJ Cleaver and Amy Melchiorre discuss the transition from using the IU for the blended program to having district teachers take on more responsibility.
- Amy Melchiorre explains the benefits of teachers having more ownership over the program, including better alignment with current curriculum and more flexibility for students.
- Amanda Orzolek inquires about other strategies on how to bring Cyber attending students back to Bloomsburg and/or the Blended program. Amanda suggests having an information night for parents of cyber students to showcase the benefits of staying connected with Bloomsburg. She also discussed the importance of phone calls to the families as each phone call and student we get back to the district can save us thousands of dollars.
- JJ Cleaver and Ann Kostiuk discuss the potential cost savings and the importance of individualizing plans for cyber students.

## **Special Education Services at Beaver Main**

- JJ Cleaver proposes revamping the special education services at Beaver Main to better utilize staff and provide more consistent support to students.
- Mary Rose Latorre explains the current scheduling challenges and the benefits of having students receive services at Memorial only.
- JJ explains that the plan is to utilize the van each day to bring three students to Memorial Elementary for these enhanced services. The students will be receiving help daily and we will not need to have coverage for our staff the day that she needs to travel to Beaver-Main.
- Amanda Orzolek raises concerns about the length of time for transportation for these students and potential pushback from parents, but JJ Cleaver assures that the new model will provide more consistent support and he feels the families will be receptive to it.
- The group discusses the logistics of transporting students to Memorial and the potential for using the existing van service. JJ to analyze the logistics of transportation to reduce the travel time as much as possible for the students

## **Meeting Conclusion and Next Steps**

- Amanda Orzolek emphasizes the importance of having more board members present to provide additional perspectives in the future.
- JJ Cleaver mentions the need to communicate with the press about the new initiatives and the potential cost savings.
- The meeting adjourns at 6:52 PM with plans to reconvene at a date to be determined.

## **Action Items**

- [ ] Sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CISPA.
- [ ] Provide information about the CIS program to the local newspaper for a news story.
- [ ] CISPA needs assessment and annual school support plan will be developed this summer and shared with the committee
- [ ] Amy to create a document clarifying roles of different mental health service providers.
- [ ] A ribbon-cutting ceremony is planned when launching the partnership with the new district
- [ ] Reach out to families currently enrolled in cyber charter schools to encourage them to consider the district's blended learning program.
- [ ] Develop a one-page flyer or brochure about the district's blended learning program to share with families.
- [ ] Administration to develop strategies to attract cyber school students back to the district.
- [ ] Gather student and parent testimonials about the benefits of the blended learning program to include in promotional materials.
- [ ] Finalize the transportation plan for the Beaver Main Elementary students receiving learning support services at Memorial Elementary- focusing on optimizing the route