

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
MARION COUNTY, INDIANA, HELD MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2008**

PRESENT: Geoffrey Horen, Randall Bland, Steve Randall, Christopher Wood, Walter Bourke, Jim Snapp, Ron Blackgrave, Jim McWhirt, Barbara Fengya, Ann Puckett-Harpold, Jill Britt (Mr. Bland arrived at 7:15 p.m.)

The Board of Education of the Franklin Township Community School Corporation, Marion County, Indiana, met in Special Session at 7:00 P.M. at the Administration Offices, located at 6141 South Franklin Road, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46259, on Monday, March 10, 2008. All Board Members and news media had been duly notified and the agenda properly posted.

REGULAR MEETING

Vice President Horen called the Special Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Randall offered the prayer and read the FTCSC Mission Statement.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice President Horen asked Dr. Bourke if there were any changes to the agenda. Dr. Bourke replied that there were not any changes. Mr. Randall moved to approve the agenda and Mr. Wood seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

CURRICULUM REPORT – DR JIM SNAPP, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Dr. Snapp shared with Board members that this is the second meeting today regarding the results of the Curriculum Management Audit with the first meeting being for the principals and teachers. He commented that they were very pleased to see that nearly 80 people attended the first meeting. He explained that the presentation is a culmination of our Curriculum Management Audit that was done in November of 2007 and shared that an audit is the most comprehensive review that can be done and it, like any audit, does not look at our positives, but the items that we need to improve on. He introduced Dr. Olive Kulas who was the lead auditor.

CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AUDIT – Dr. Olive Kulas

Dr. Olive Kulas stated that she is very glad to be here on behalf of Phi Delta Kappa to present the results of their analysis of our School Corporation. She explained that the report is a result of interviews with Board members, teachers, administrators, and community members, school site visits, and the examination of policies and documents from several levels of instruction and administration. She added that what she is presenting this evening is an overview of the information and recommendations in the report and that each of the Board member will be receiving a copy of the report (Exhibit No. 08-30).

Dr. Kulas gave a definition of a curriculum audit stating that it is an examination of the school system as a whole which involves the analysis of the interrelationships among system components and their impact on the overall quality of the organization in accomplishing its purpose. She explained that the audit process involved comparing the elements of the school system in FTCSC against five curricular standards and then she proceeded to outline and expound on their findings. (Standards and Findings are listed below.)

STANDARD 1: Demonstrates control of resources, programs and personnel

FINDINGS:

1. Board policies are not adequate to provide for curriculum management and control.
2. The administrative structure does not meet audit criteria for effective organizational management. Job descriptions are inadequate.

(Mr. Horen asked if the ‘Span of control beyond 12 persons’ relates to education or is it pertinent across all businesses. Dr. Kulas responded that it is based on principles that also come out of the work force, but reality is that it is not always possible to live the ideal due to budget restraints and other obstacles.)

3. Planning is not comprehensive, connected across departments, or monitored for results.

STANDARD 2: Has established clear and valid objectives for student learning

FINDINGS:

1. No documented process of curriculum planning to coordinate and direct the design, delivery, and evaluation of the written curriculum.
2. Scope of curriculum adequate K-8; not adequate 9-12.
3. The quality of the written curriculum is inadequate to provide clear direction for teaching and learning.
4. Curriculum resources match the content and context of standards; they do not support a range of cognitive processes.

(Mr. Horen inquired as to how differentiation of students affects our ability to offer a more challenging and rigorous curriculum in all classroom environments. Dr. Kulas replied that they have found that a more engaging curriculum attracts more students to stay engaged. Dr. Bourke stated that simply put when you engage students it is easy to differentiate for them, but you can differentiate for them and not engage them at all.)

STANDARD 3: Demonstrates internal consistency and rational equity in program development and implementation

FINDINGS:

1. Lack of curriculum articulation and coordination, and a disconnection between roles and responsibilities contribute to inconsistencies which impede curriculum delivery and student access to equitable programs, services, and resources.
2. Professional development planning and coordination is inadequate to support curriculum delivery.

STANDARD 4: Has used results of student performance to adjust and improve practices and programs

FINDINGS:

1. Assessment planning lacks a systemic approach to provide information for decision-making.
2. The scope of assessment is inadequate to monitor achievement in all courses taught in all grades
3. Student achievement data show a downward trend in the achievement levels of all students, and achievement gaps for some subgroups are widening.

(Dr. Snapp stated that when we look at the downward trend in student performance for the last three years, it is very important for us to assess our programs, whether it makes some educators uncomfortable or not, and to interject and offer strategies to close these achievement gaps.)

4. Data are not consistently used to monitor curriculum delivery or make decisions at the system or site level to provide feedback on student achievement and program effectiveness.
5. The appraisal system for administrators and teachers fails to meet the expectation that improvement of instruction is the primary function of evaluation.

STANDARD 5: Has improved productivity

FINDINGS:

1. The corporation’s budget development and decision-making are not fully aligned to its mission, curricular goals, and strategic priorities, nor is there an adequate cost-benefit analysis to assure maximum productivity.

2. Technology is adequate but underutilized, which limits its impact on learning processes and business efficiencies.
3. Facilities are exemplary and provide adequate learning environments. Projected growth requires continual planning.

Dr. Kulas' presentation concluded with the following Recommendations:

1. Adopt a policy governing the management of job descriptions and the table of organization. Prepare and adopt a set of quality job descriptions and revise the table of organization consistent with sound management principles. Configure personnel to ensure that the essential functions relating to curriculum design, delivery, assessment, data management and interpretation, and program evaluation are covered.
2. Initiate efforts to incorporate planning for all functions under the umbrella of the comprehensive planning process to ensure linkage of organizational efforts and to support shared purpose. Review and revise the district plan to meet audit criteria.
3. Review, revise, adopt and implement board policies meeting the characteristics of sound curriculum management with a special emphasis on codifying, in board policy, the current planning function of the district.
4. Articulate expectations for teaching and learning that close the achievement gap among student groups and address access by all students to mastery of expected learning outcomes through mindful engagement in cognitively rigorous instruction. Revise the staff appraisal system to create the capacity for feedback related to effective delivery of curriculum.
5. Develop and implement a multi-year plan that fully aligns district and building level resources to curricular goals and strategic priorities and which includes systematic cost-benefit analyses to assure that expenditures are producing desired results.

A discussion followed Dr. Kulas' presentation.

Mr. Bland stated with regards to the suggested revisions to Board policies there are items that he feels that are the superintendent's responsibility and not the Board members' decisions. Dr. Kulas replied that the Board should define a curriculum that is going to be used by all employees in the district to carry out the mission of the School Board which is to ensure that the school system is delivering for the community. She stated that how that actually takes place is the job of the administration.

Mr. Randall commented that he believes that our current Policy Manual is inadequate in several areas and that the direction of instruction primarily at the elementary level has needed realignment for awhile. He added that he gets the impression from the community that we are moving in the right direction, but we don't have all of the pieces in place yet. He asked Dr. Kulas if during their evaluation did they see any signs of progress. Dr. Kulas commented that there are many good things in place in this district, but the problem is that they are not connected to what other sites are doing and, even though you are moving in the right direction, you are still a system of schools and not a school system. Dr. Bourke responded with the following analogy: When we talk about staying healthy, we talk about exercising and good diet. When we talk to an injured person we don't talk about staying healthy, we talk about recovering from their injury. With our schools, we needed to 'stop the bleeding' or address the underperformance of our students first and now we can concentrate on a plan for the big picture and we will use the results of this audit to help guide us towards improving student achievement.

Mr. Wood commented that this report is a great tool and roadmap for the Board members. He stated that we have identified several of the same areas for improvement, but that this will really assist us in keeping on track and not losing track of the 'whole' picture. Dr. Kulas stated that the teachers that attended today also feel the readiness for improvement and are willing to do what it

takes to accomplish the improved goals and as your corporation continues to grow it is vital that everyone is on the same track. She stated that our community is looking for a more rigorous curriculum and will welcome the challenges for their children.

Mr. Horen asked Dr. Kulas for an example besides ISTEP scores that this Board might use to measure student achievement. She replied that your school district as well as others establish benchmark assessments for measuring student performance. Dr. Snapp replied that our principals have studied the data from their ISTEP scores and are now working to make effective changes in the classrooms to increase the scores. He added that there are a number of things moving in the right direction, but it will take awhile to see the results. Dr. Bourke stated that the work that is being done in this school district is absolutely exciting and what Dr. Kulas has given us is the framework to formalize what the Board members have recently approved with regards to programming changes, etc. Dr. Kulas stated that there is great energy and a great readiness in this district and that you are at a prime juncture to take this and run with it for the next 3 – 5 years.

Mr. McWhirt commented that Dr. Snapp will have an opportunity in late spring to give him input for the budget of dollars that he will need for curriculum. He stated that there is some flexibility, but it is easier to know in advance what money will be needed. Mr. Randall asked if the money that is given to each building can be used to purchase items that ultimately contributes to the schools offering different programs. Mr. McWhirt replied that the principal has the authority to purchase items for their site with the hope that they use their money wisely and it is usually used for operational items. Dr. Bourke commented that examples of investing our budgeted dollars to increase student performance are: increasing to 80 minutes of math and language arts at the middle school level and putting money in our elementary schools to reduce class sizes.

Mr. Wood commented that Dr. Kulas has lengthened our ‘to do list’.

Mr. Bland asked if Dr. Kulas sensed that the community’s perception was that they are being heard by the administration. Dr. Kulas responded that she sensed that there is a new administration in town, and that the new administration is doing things differently and that they have a sense of hope and urgency and that they want to get on board.

Mr. Randall thanked Dr. Kulas and her team for their hard work with this process. Mr. Bland, Mr. Wood and Mr. Horen also thanked her for coming and sharing her time and information with us.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Bland asked that the Board room be set-up for every regular monthly Board Meeting to mirror the set-up this evening – the use of 80 chairs for the audience instead of the usual 40 chairs. He stated that he feels it sends a statement to the community that they are invited and welcome to attend. Dr. Bourke replied that we are not opposed to setting up 80 chairs, but it is less work for our custodial staff to only set-up two rooms. Mr. Blackgrave also commented that sometimes the adjoining conference room is being used for a different meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Randall moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice President Horen declared the Special Meeting adjourned 8:50 p.m.

APPROVED

Geoffrey W. Horen, Vice President

Christopher Wood, Secretary

Randall Bland, Member

Steve Randall, Member