

Teacher Quality Committee
January 29, 2008
4:15 p.m. High School Library
Meeting Notes

The meeting was called to order at 4:20 p.m. Members present were: Robin Spears, Matt Meendering, Cindy Barwick, Jenni McCrory, Wendy Roder, Amanda Buse, Jim Gude, and Sherrie Zeutenhorst.
Absent: none.

Jim Gude made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting held January 14, 2008. Cindy Barwick seconded and the motion carried.

The first item on the agenda was “Teacher Evaluation Procedures”. Sherrie Zeutenhorst asked for clarification on whether or not the current evaluation tool was a state mandate. The current evaluation document used asks for verification of the 8 Standards and 32 criteria. Robin Spears confirmed that the current instrument used is a state mandate as well as a district adopted policy and procedures. He then stated that it was the Iowa Department of Education’s decision to try and get all districts on the same page as to how teachers are evaluated. Prior to the adoption of this instrument in 2005, there were many different types of evaluation instruments used by school districts. He then added that it is a statewide evaluation system which uses the same set of standards and criteria. He also informed the group that the school board expects that tenured teachers are evaluated every three years and that new teachers be evaluated every year during their first three years of employment in our district. “It is our goal to help engage teachers in a continuous improvement process and to help you be the best teacher you can be”. Wendy Roder stated that teachers do not mind the evaluations, “we look at it as a way to learn to get better. Teachers crave ideas and the relationship that occurs in the helping process”. She then added that the old evaluation instrument which used the words “meet” or “exceed” seemed to allow for more discussion and dialogue. Jim Gude then added that it seems like it’s just a compliance issue. He stated that it’s a necessary thing, but does it need to be so much work. “Maybe we are making it harder than it needs to be”. Wendy Roder then added that she feels it has gotten away from the intent of what evaluation was about. She indicated that teachers want to get something meaningful out of it, and that this instrument seems very non-personal. “The teachers are hungry for feedback”. Cindy Barwick stated that the current evaluation tool helps her to be more concrete in her feedback to teachers. “It’s specific – it tells me which criteria are being met and which ones aren’t”. Jenni McCrory also agreed and stated, “How do you know if a teacher met a standard? The teacher must meet every criterion under each standard”.

Robin Spears then explained that all Tier 1 teachers must be evaluated using the current evaluation tool. The principals must either observe or the teachers must provide evidence that all eight standards and 42 criteria are met. Tier 2 teachers are also being evaluated using the current instrument during the formative and summative parts of the evaluation. Discussion then centered around streamlining the process for both teachers and administrators. Jenni McCrory offered that perhaps an administrator could check off the criteria through a discussion with the teacher to make sure the standard is being met. Cindy Barwick agreed that this could be an option. Robin Spears again emphasized that it is important for something to be changing or making a difference for a teacher because of the evaluation process.

Robin Spears then stated a need to change the language on page 3, #4 of the “Teacher Presentation of Artifacts” (for career teachers who are veterans in the SCSD (non-probationary) of the “Teacher Evaluation Process & Procedures” document to reflect this change.

The next Teacher Quality Committee meeting will be on February 5 at 4:15 in the Middle School.

Sherrie Zeutenhorst made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jim Gude seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.