

Teacher Quality Committee
December 6, 2007
4:15 p.m. High School Library
Meeting notes

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. All members were present. Members include: Robin Spears, Matt Meendering, Cindy Barwick, Jenni McCrory, Amanda Buse, Wendy Roder, Jim Gude, and Sherrie Zeutenhorst. Jenni McCrory made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting held on November 27, 2007. Matt Meendering seconded the motion and the motion carried.

The first item on the agenda was "Professional Development Days". Mr. Spears reviewed that we plan to use the two professional days afforded to us from "Senate File 277 Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program" in the following manner:

May 19 – Teacher Inservice Day K-12 to address district and building goals
8 hours – Flexible time given to each teacher to address individual needs (to be completed January – May 2008)

Building principals reviewed their ideas for a reflection or assignment which needs to be handed in to the building principals upon completion of the eight hours of flex-time. Mr. Meendering shared that at the high school level, he'd like to see each teacher hand in results of their individual or group findings, as well as a reflective piece that would include how their findings will impact their teaching and consequently student achievement in the classroom. He also mentioned that he'd like to see each teacher present their project and findings with the rest of the high school staff during the inservice day at the end of the school year. Mrs. Barwick echoed a similar idea in that she first wants to see a proposal written by every teacher addressing what they plan to do with their eight hours of flex-time. Mrs. McCrory included that she'd like to see how their project would go along with each teacher's individual Career Development Plan. The committee agreed that they do not want to review every teacher's plan and reflections for the flex-time assignment; rather they feel the building principals ought to approve the plans and the reflective pieces for substance. Mr. Spears requested that we show a few examples of what a proposal for a project might look like to the staff during the January 3 inservice day. Jim Gude and Matt Meendering each offered to provide an example for our January inservice day.

The next item on the agenda included "Teacher Evaluation Procedures". Mr. Spears emphasized that our role as a committee is to insure continuity and consistency in regard to teacher evaluation. Discussion included that all three buildings are consistent in requiring a pre-observation, an observation, and a post-observation. However, there are different expectations at each building level in regard to what ought to be included in the portfolio (which demonstrates the eight teaching standards and thirty-two criteria). He also added that, "whatever we do, we must make the evaluation process a valuable experience in order to help each teacher sharpen their saw". All committee members agreed that the current evaluation instrument creates a focus and helps to determine particular areas to work on. Mrs. Zeutenhorst commented that she'd like to be evaluated with the ASCA (American School Counselor Association) model. This instrument would more specifically measure a guidance counselor's duties and responsibilities. Mr. Spears added that with new legislation requiring districts to hire media specialists and guidance counselors, that we need to consider how to evaluate the performance of these positions since their duties are a bit different from that of a teacher. Mr. Spears stated that all three building principals will get together during the holiday break and will review teacher evaluation with an emphasis on minimizing busy work. Mr. Spears will share these ideas with the Teacher Quality Committee at a later date.

The next item of discussion included "Exemplars of the Teaching Standards". Mrs. Barwick stated that this has become an item of importance in regard to the issue of career increment. When she is asked to write a letter which states whether or not an activity meets or exceeds a particular standard, there has been no clear rules or guidelines established. Mr. Spears added, "If we are going to have a recommendation that is worth 5 points, we ought to be able to grab it and make it be tangible". Jim Gude shared that most teachers move through Career Merit through years of service and/or graduate credit hours earned. He also emphasized that no matter what we do, it must be as objective as possible. Mr. Spears commented that the Career Merit system is part of a performance-based pay system.

The next item of discussion centered on the intensive assistance program. The committee felt that we are doing an adequate job in this area.

The final item of discussion was "Market Factor Pay". Senate File 277 provides these monies so that school districts may offer sign-on bonuses to attempt to attract hard to fill positions. These monies also help to pay for tuition when teachers are asked to teach in an area they are not certified in. Our committee agreed to the use these funds in this manner.

Agenda items for the next meeting include: professional development days, exemplar teaching standards, and market factor pay. The meeting will be held on Monday, December 17 at 4:15 p.m. in the high school library.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.