**Education Committee Meeting Minutes**

**September 21, 2020 – 7:00 p.m. Zoom**

**Board Discussion Items**

Mrs. Ashbaugh mentioned to those in attendance that a petition and a number of letters have been sent to the School Board requesting the return of students to school. Because of that, she has asked Dr. English to comment briefly about the back to school plan. She also mentioned that the petition will be part of the Hearing of Citizens during the Regular Voting Meeting.

Dr. English thanked everyone for attending. He mentioned that the residents’ voices have been heard, and he will try to address questions. He explained that the virus was different in July than it is today. Pittsburgh came to be a hot spot. We are now three weeks into the plan. He has partnered with a company (Epistemix) to help make informed decision in addition to the health metrics that the District is currently looking at relating to COVID. This company will offer updates to the District every 2 weeks for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year, and it free of charge to the District. Once we acquire more definitive numbers, we can better plan. We are currently looking at hybrid models and plan to offer viable hybrid option for the 2dn nine weeks. Our teachers have been a big part of the planning process. COVID has to be kept in the front of our minds. It is a serious and dangerous virus. We need to mitigate the transmission of the virus as much as possible. We know that this is burdensome, and Dr. English thanked the parents for all that they are doing at home. Caring about the students and providing for their safety is the #1 priority in terms of current and future planning. We will continue to share information as it becomes available. He also added that transitioning between plans takes time and collaboration.

Mrs. Ashbaugh added that we have been receiving many questions. She asked that everyone understand that no district is the same, every district is different and cannot be compared to one another. Dr. English also added that Epistemix, our partnering company, is a free service. He also mentioned that parents have asked why we can participate in sports and wanted to assure everyone that we are following the CDC recommended guidelines, as well as consulting with the PIAA and WPIAL governing bodies.

Mrs. Hurt-Robinson also asked Ms. Good to touch on the bussing situation and how it will work in a hybrid model. Ms. Good explained the number of busses currently contracted and the challenges we will face with students coming back in person.

**Student Enrollment Update: 933 –** Ms. Good mentioned that the student enrollment number includes outside placements. Dr. English added that we do not want students leaving the District, and that the District is not experiencing noteworthy attrition during the current crisis.

Mrs. Hurt-Robinson then reviewed the topics below:

**Elementary Academic Topics:**

* **K-6 Seesaw is up and running** – Seesaw is a K-6 learning platform specifically designed for younger students, allowing them to submit assignments, receive accolades, share work, and share videos. This program is up and running for all K-6 students.
* **Clever sign in given to all students on Friday** – Last Friday, all students in grades k-6 received their QR Code card to experience a one stop sign in. This will make it easier for students and teachers to gain access to important programs and materials.
* **Teachers are using InSync for Eureka** – This is another application that students are using for math, and allows for online videos and assessments. This helps teachers manage the virtual setting more efficiently.
* **Verner Maker Space finished** – We know that this was discussed previously, but the grant that Verner received for the maker space in the Verner library is finished and ready for use. This is a beautiful space.
* **Online Book Exchange every three weeks for library** – Children and their parents were sent a video of how to access the online catalogue for the school libraries, and our librarian developed an online request form for students to request books, and pick up and drop off books every three weeks during their material pick up times. This started on Friday of last week, and we’ve already had many requests.
* **Special education** – So far, the students have been quite successful. This has a been good practice to handle symptoms and social distancing. A couple of students with symptoms, but fortunately, no confirmed cases.
* **Meet the Teacher / Curriculum Nights complete** – These events have been completed and were all virtual this year. These were reported by administration and staff to be successful.
* **Virtual instruction** - Reports from staff and administration claim that although not perfect (server delays, and Microsoft delays at times) each day has gone more smoothly as time has passed. Students are understanding expectations, and staff are becoming more adept with the technology and applications necessary to instruct students appropriately. There is “live” online instruction daily.
* **Online Etiquette/Expectations** - This document was created by school staff and sent out to parents in order to help establish routines, expectations, and protocol for online learning. Many parents have taken to this work, and have made spaces for their students to learn at home.
* **Technology Devices** – The tech department have updated, prepared, and delivered devices to all students and families that need it.
* **Student government** – These groups will be up and running in the next couple of weeks, and will be great additional opportunities for upper elementary students.
* **Girls on the Run starting again at Verner** – This is a yearly group and is up and running as well.

**Secondary Academic Topics:**

* **Virtual Open House in planning stages** – This will occur remotely, and teachers and administrators are planning accordingly. More information will be released shortly on the details.
* **Online instruction** – This is running smoothly. We are still working on getting students to start on time, and students that miss are funneled through the Student Assistance Plan (SAP). Reports from staff and administration, however, claim that although not perfect (server delays, and Microsoft delays at times) each day has gone more smoothly as time has passed. Students are understanding expectations, and staff are becoming more adept with the technology and applications necessary to instruct students appropriately. There is “live” online instruction daily.
* **Student devices** - The tech department have updated, prepared, and delivered devices to all students and families that need it.
* **Student Action Network** – As previously discussed, this is a student-led group with teachers and administrators designed to analyze the student handbook and various curricula to address issues of race and equity – first meeting on Sept. 23rd or the 30th. More to come.
* **Special education** - So far, the students have been quite successful. This has a been good practice to handle symptoms and social distancing. A couple of students with symptoms, but fortunately, no confirmed cases.
* **Riverview Cyber** – There are 9 full time cyber students (up from 3 last year) – saved 6 students from going to cyber school at approximately 18K (27K special education)
* AP Enrollment – 163 high school students taking AP courses.

**Professional Learning Communities (PLC) Update:**

* Administration worked with the teacher union to combine the first 10 hours of the teacher’s PLC time to use

**Enrollment:**

* There is a misnomer that the District is experiencing a loss of students. This is not the case. The difference between last year’s large graduating class and this year’s smaller Kindergarten class largely makes up the difference. Here are the numbers:

**2019 -2020 2020-2021**

Home schooled 7 Home schooled 14

Cyber/Charter 34 Cyber/Charter 23

Outside Placements 28 Outside Placements 23

Non-Public/Parochial 56 Non-Public/Parochial 52

The Education Committee Meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm and moved to the Regular Voting Meeting.