

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
Woodstock Academy Board of Trustees
Academic Committee
December 14, 2009

PRESENT: H. Barlow, C. Caron, B. Child, P. Paquette, H. Singleton, T. Stokes, S. Young

GUEST: Dr. Frank Baran

ABSENT: P. Green, P. Harrington, R. Rhault, A. Spalding

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairperson Philippa Paquette.

Citizen's Participation – None.

MOTION: (Barlow, Stokes) To accept the minutes of the meeting of November 16, 2009 with a minor typographical correction.

Abstained – Young
All Others in Favor

REVIEW OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK

Mrs. Singleton presented a copy of the Professional Development Plan. She stated that the Academy has not had a plan in place that looks at long-term goals or had a resource where issues about professional development were all in one place. This plan represents a vision of how professional development is going to be part of the Academy's evolution as a school and serves as a functional resource for teachers.

Mrs. Singleton reviewed the plan. She stated that the first task of the committee was to determine purpose, goals, and how to use time effectively. The plan needed to be anchored in long-term planning in thinking about professional development and the best practices that are out there. Faculty have been surveyed in the last two years about structure, purpose, and what is meaningful. The goal is to update the handbook annually and keep a five-year rolling plan in place. Forms will be electronic.

Mrs. Paquette asked how teachers who go out for professional development disseminate their experience with other staff as a benefit to the rest of the community. Mrs. Singleton stated that there are two different models being used. For example, for some national conferences, 2-3 members of the department will attend and then share resources at their next department meeting. As another example, for larger experiences, such as Kate Field's trip to Germany or Jason Musko's Fulbright Scholarship to Germany, a teacher academy is scheduled where the faculty member can share resources with the faculty - it is a larger scale presentation to the broader community. Teachers get CEU's to attend teacher academy.

Mrs. Paquette asked if there were any data collection on whether the techniques or shared resources are used by other teachers. Mrs. Singleton stated that she was not sure she could validate it with hard data, only anecdotal.

Mrs. Singleton stated that the committee also looked at dynamics of how time was used, such as faculty meetings. The idea is to utilize this time for "teacher talk", coming up with key topics

important to the big picture, giving teachers opportunities to discuss, share resources, and see how they connect. The idea would also be to have teachers facilitate.

Mrs. Singleton noted that Ms. Sara Dziedzic polished the process and did the research piece for the document. Mrs. Paquette asked about the assessment tool and whether it would include what SRBI will require. Mrs. Singleton stated that it would. She stated that some faculty are having difficulty with seeing how a formal assessment can help them. She stated that there needs to be a balance between looking at data and how we teach, and looking at the curriculum and what we teach.

Mr. Barlow noted the reference in professional development goals regarding a safe environment was repeated several times. He asked if there were a problem and if this was addressing some problem. Mrs. Singleton stated that it does not but goes with statewide mandates that we need to do as a school. There is along list of things that schools need to do. The intention is to focus on some of the key things that we need to do. She stated that in the past several years, as an example, the school chose to focus on bullying. She stated that there needs to be the opportunity for teachers to learn about some of these things and know what to do.

INDICATORS FOR SUCCESS

Mrs. Singleton distributed a proposed evaluative tool for school-wide performance. She stated that there was debate on the title and whether it should be indicators of excellence versus success. The intent is for us to have data based information upon which we can evaluate our success holistically, as a school. Goals would be in reaction to working on some of these difference performance levels as a result. She stated that there would-be two different forms – a public version with global perspectives on different categories, and an internal data base where we disaggregate further by department, course, teacher, etc. She stated that this could then be used internally to look at combinations of teachers, best practices, and who is successful.

Mrs. Singleton stated that this assessment would be similar to the academic report that she gives annually. It would provide information to discuss and talk about. She stated that the idea is to publish it and as a result of identifying this as important data, it will help to shape our program. She stated that it also helps us to focus on rigor and accountability. Mr. Caron stated that this is where most schools fall down. He stated that the second part of this process would be stake holder surveys done on a regular systematic basis with graduates, parents, freshmen, sending towns, etc., on how we are doing our job. He stated that we should use the information from effectiveness measures and stakeholder surveys to drill down to department, course, classroom and student level a bit more.

Mrs. Singleton stated that the assessment asked some of the basics but departments will include some of the specifics for their courses or departments in their assessments; i.e. foreign language may include a survey question on foreign trips.

Mrs. Paquette asked if there was any way to get data from colleges about how well prepared our students are when they get there, or from local companies as to how our students are doing in the workplace. Mrs. Singleton stated that there is a service that you can purchase that collected data from all the colleges that your students attended on how they did. She stated that it would also help us to collect the kind of data that we have been looking for about attrition and how many students go on from 2 year to 4-year colleges or otherwise.

Mrs. Singleton stated that on the assessment there may be categories that are more inclined to include a narrative, i.e. racial isolation. Mr. Barlow stated that he liked the form and suggested

that a line be added where there may need further explanation in any given year. Mr. Caron stated that places that use these well use them over time. It is a systematic review with outcomes made based on the data and changes to follow. Mrs. Singleton stated that we have used this data in various places over the years, but never all in one place. She stated that we also need to get people assigned to collect the data. Mr. Young asked if it was worth setting up a system that would produce averages to show trends and not just peaks and valleys. Mrs. Paquette asked if there were data collection software available. Mr. Caron stated that he has used it in the past to track financial data and student performance data, and that it is expensive.

Discussion took place about how it would be very effective as a K-12 data warehouse. There is current access to data through Edline (from the Academy) to superintendents. She stated that we provide them whatever information they want on their students. Each superintendent has an access code so it is not open to everyone. She stated that she does not have feedback on who is using it. Some superintendents are worried about confidentiality and hesitate to use it. She stated that Edline was a good thing to open up but it is getting mixed results from superintendents.

ACTIONS TO EXPLORE PK-12 LEARNING COMMUNITY

Mrs. Paquette stated that the next item is also related to our Framework for Advancement and is an important thing for the Academy to do. She stated that the great job that elementary and middle schools can do, can only make us better. We need to complete the loop. Discussion took place about the Race to the Top Grant which may drive some of this. Mr. Caron stated that it is a state competitive grant which local superintendents will be discussing shortly. Dr. Baran offered an explanation of the grant and the process that is in place for the state to apply for \$175 million. He noted that the objectives are good but it asks schools to take a risk, particularly for the Academy as an independent school.

The committee brainstormed on ideas for a PK-12 Learning Community and some of the challenges that will need to be addressed:

- Talented and gifted opportunities for sending town schools (transportation issues)
- Staff exchanges (time and scheduling issues)
- Student exchanges (already in progress on some basis)
- Electronic discussions and meetings or similar kinds of communication strategies
- TEAM Program/BEST Program as a regional opportunity/evaluation
- World Languages and sharing of resources
- Cultivation of relationship with leaders of sending schools, i.e. reinstating principals meetings

MOTION: (Child, Stokes) To adjourn the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Willis
Board Secretary