

Academic Freedom Meeting

January 17, 2019, 4:00 PM

Present: Glen Szymoniak, Jill O'Donnell, John Rademacher, Geralyn Smith, Kay Linman, Laci Teaters, Cori Swan, Jennifer Hayes, Sarah Shively, Stephanie LeRoy. Audience members present.

Glen began by ensuring all members had their binder of materials and know where to find the survey results on the website.

He then asked if any audience members if they were there to give testimony. Two people indicated they had testimony to give. Nicole Schiedler and Kjerstin Spark-Stahl.

- Nicole Schiedler, 5th grade at Shasta, 2nd year teacher – diving deeper into a subject equals longer retention. Distinguished teachers are facilitators.
- Kjerstin Spark-Stahl, Social Studies at LR, 12 years – From her secondary perspective. Speaking about what she has observed at the middle school level regarding preparedness, the elementary week does not allow enough time to adequately teach the social studies standards. Students exhibit zero exposure to history when they get to her class. This a change from the early part of her career.

Discussion about setting a future meeting date. Wednesday, February 13, 4:00PM

The committee reviewed the charge.

Glen asked members to be present at the March 7th Regular Board Meeting to address the Board and answer any questions.

Discussion about common messages/comments from the survey:

Reading

- Deep concern, lack of time for science, social studies, and art
- Structured play/exploration
- Lack of love for reading
- WIN time
 - One size fits all issues/Benchmark
- Lack of Differentiation
- Lack of small group time instruction
- Loss of creativity and supplemental materials
- Reading program is an excellent base.
- Priority Plan time allotment issues
- Time – Reading block
- Lack of flexibility
- Integrated units/Project based learning

Math

- Fluency, lack of basic facts
- Time spent on concept development
- Need for review
- Not hands on, not engaging
- Flexibility to use manipulatives, differentiation

What do you wish you had more time for?

- Social studies, science, art.....
- Centers
- Emotional needs

Professional training

- Behavior management
- Technology
- Math/Math intervention
- Science and Social studies and updated materials

General Comments

- Not asking for total academic freedom
- Trust professional judgement
- Fear during walkthroughs of being off task needs to stop
- Art of teaching, able to use their professional craft

Cori pointed out the portion of the charge that says to research AF practices and asked for clarification. Are we supposed to be researching other districts' language? Kay believes it means to study actual practices, instruction implementation, etc.

Kay said she is encouraged to bring in supplemental materials when needed.

Glen asked the committee to identify disconnects.

- Geralyn (K-1) there is NO TIME to bring in supplemental materials after completing the priority plan.
- Laci – there's a responsibility to teach standards.
- Glen – the curriculum department will need to be involved with some of these to clarify inaccurate information.
- Kay – a disconnect between perceived purpose of walkthroughs vs actual purpose. Seen as a "gotcha moment".
- John asked who goes on walkthroughs. The trained reading experts, who are trying to make it a deliberate, evolving, celebratory process.

- Cori said it is problematic that teachers cannot order supplemental math curriculum from the print shop, this was told to teachers by administrators.
- Feels like they are being critiqued on walkthroughs, it's unnerving.
- Original intent of walkthroughs was to grow your own people, give feedback and continue personal growth as trainers.
- If walkthroughs are a district wide practice, so too should be the ability of a teacher to seek guidance by observing an expert. Would show cooperation.
- Checking for implementation is causing the fear.
- Do the walkthroughs bring new info to admins?
- All kids don't have to love to read. They need to know how to do it.
- Small group, differentiation – leads to love of reading.

How can we wrap up, what's our homework assignment? What can we be doing to progress prior to the next meeting and not just pick up where the conversation left off.

Glen paraphrased current bargaining agreement language and reiterated the charge of this committee is to evaluate that language. A copy of the related article was given to committee members. It would seem the language does not need to be changed, perhaps we need to examine changing practices.

Laci – what were the conversations like at the union meetings that prompted this push. Cori responded – when they evaluated TELL survey results and this piece stood out. Lack of freedom and flexibility to differentiate.

Does the language need to change and if it does, what would it say. And is what the recommendation to the Board will be.

Jennifer does not believe the language needs to be changed.

Cori said WIN is not working; centers need to be part of the day.

Annette Quinowski (audience member), Kindergarten teacher at Merrill – teachers need the freedom to be an adult and make professional decisions.

For the next meeting – the assignment is thoughtful consideration of current contract language with suggestions if necessary. With the intent of making a recommendation to the Board.

John – individualization of instruction is extremely important.

Cori feels like this language is not meeting the needs of KCEA employees.

Sarah – consistent curriculum is extremely important, due to mobility of students.

Again – the survey results are on the website, under the School Board section.

Next meeting Wednesday, 2/13/19, 4PM.

Meeting ended at 6:05 PM