

Port Washington Board of Education
Policy and Personnel Committee Meeting
Friday, January 29, 2016

Members in Attendance: Dr. Kathleen Mooney, Ms. Elaine Fenick
Ms. Nora Johnson, Ms. Elizabeth Weisburd, Mr. Larry Greenstein

Guests: Howard Miller, Esq., Ms. Karen Sloan, Mr. Ira Pernick

Community: Kate Hirsch, Jeanne Carl, Rachel Gandin, George Borda, Jeanine DiLillo, Lynn Steinberg, Mark Fain, Chris Nadolne, Barbara Cohen, Jennifer Mannion, Dave Sattinger, Adrienne Sauer, Robin Serinsky, Meredith Steigman, Michelle Bazzini

Meeting was called to order at 8:39 a.m. by Ms. Nora Johnson. Minutes were approved from the December 18, 2015 meeting by Ms. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Greenstein and will be posted.

Personnel Update

Ms. Elaine Fenick reported that the Human Resources Department has received four retirement notifications from teachers. Today is the last day of receiving the incentive. Tenure recommendations will soon be given to the committee. Dr. Mooney reported that she went ahead and approved the contract with School Wires to redesign the website because the pricing given to Mr. Meloni was a special deal and the district needed to move forward.

Discussion: Returning of tests at Schreiber High School

Ms. Johnson reminded the committee that two years ago the board initially met and an agreement was made which went through the PGCD process for recommendation. Dr. Mooney stated that today is a follow up about that agreement and Mr. Ira Pernick, Principal of Schreiber High School, is here to report.

Mr. Pernick reported that the agreement is: exams will be returned in all subject areas with the exception of AP and Honors. AP and Honors is at the teacher's discretion. Mr. Pernick said that the teachers are following the recommendations as stated in the handbook which are reviewed by department chairpersons annually with the teachers. The students keep the returned tests in Regents level and below classes. Ms. Johnson mentioned that in Honors Biology the tests are not given back since the tests are reused. The first exam given in Honors Biology is a difficult exam because the students are not accustomed to taking this type of exam. The transition from eighth to ninth grade can be challenging for some students. For the 2016-17 school year, however, this first exam will be revised. The instruction will change and students will be provided with practice exams questions to familiarize themselves for the test.

The English Honors research project can be picked up by the students at the end of school year. This year 24% of the ninth graders are involved with the English Honors project.

Tutoring

The district policy states that a teacher cannot tutor one of their own students in the course of the current year. They can tutor another student in the same course but not a student in their class which prevents the appearance of money received for grades for one's own student. Some students have tutors to help them with test preparation while others receive outside tutoring for various reasons. Parents who hire tutors want an experienced teacher in that particular subject. Some subject teachers work together and match their curriculum which provides good instructional practices.

Teachers are available to provide extra help during 4.1 and other various times throughout the day. Students do not need to see their own teacher. They can request help from any teacher in the department. There are many opportunities to receive support at Schreiber, including peer tutoring and regents review sessions.

It was suggested to create a bank of test questions which then can be used rotationally for exams. It would be challenging to create alternative questions in the AP classes.

Howard Miller, Esq.

District cannot legally bar a teacher from working at an outside tutoring center such as Huntington Learning Center. Teachers act in good faith.

Follow Up

Mr. Pernick agreed to talk to the Honors and AP course teachers about returning tests which would mean creating new tests. Mr. Pernick will also follow up with Regents course teachers to make sure they have been following the return of the tests policy.

BOE's Diversity Committee will be looking at additional ways for students who do not have tutors to get help outside the classroom, if they so desire.

Community Comments/Concerns:

- Concerns about a teacher tutoring who knows what is exactly on the test since teachers give the same test. Is this student being given an advantage?
- Concerns that not all students can afford a tutor and this can be unfair to that student.
- If tests are too difficult, a need for tutoring is being created.
- Appreciate board looking at policy.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.
Next Meeting: February 26, 2016