

**Facility Schools Board
Minutes of Meeting - March 6, 2009
Warren Tech, Founder's Room
13300 W. 2nd Place, Lakewood**

In attendance:

Board Members: Kay Cessna, David Molineux, Brian Parks, Brad Schultz, Barb Taylor, Laura Writebol

Staff: Ellen Hunter, Kama Linscome

Members of the public

Absent: Steven Ramirez

1. Call to Order

Chairman Kay Cessna called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of Minutes

A draft of the minutes was e-mailed to Board members and copies were available at the meeting.

One item needed clarification:

A motion was made by Barb Taylor and seconded by Brad Schultz to approve the minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Brad Schultz and seconded by Brian Parks to approve the agenda as printed.

Discussion: Brad Schultz suggested that the time for the public to address the board be moved to the beginning of the meeting so that people know when to attend. There was general agreement to this idea.

The motion to approve the agenda passed unanimously.

4. Terms of Board members

Barb Taylor and Laura Writebol volunteered to serve one year terms.

Brian Parks and David Molineux volunteered to serve two year terms.

Brad Schultz, Steven Ramirez and Kay Cessna will then serve three year terms.

Board members are eligible to apply to serve consecutive terms.

One year of a term will be considered from March of the current year to March of the following year.

5. Staff Report

Kama Linscome, Facility Schools Unit, gave an update on unit activities.

- **Student Data System**

Originally, the student data system required in H.B. 08-1204 was intended to manage both general education records (attendance, grades, transcripts, etc.) and special education/IEPs, but since the bill passed, more serious discussions have occurred regarding the possibility of a state-wide IEP system. The decision was made to focus the facility's student data system on the general education needs and wait to be a part of the state-wide special education system. This will save costs in difficult economic times and will allow a gradual roll out of one system and then the other.

- Staff positions
The additional positions for the unit have been approved and have been posted or will be soon.
- CSAP
Materials for the CSAP assessment have been distributed and the check-in process will occur in April.

6. Orian Hunter – High School Guidance Counselor – Transcripts and graduation from a high school perspective

When students transfer to a new school, the school of origin sends the transcripts. The school counselor reviews the information and generally uses a credit form or worksheet to translate the credits already earned into the new districts graduation requirements.

There is a national course numbering system which is helpful in making the translation from one school system to another. Schools are being encouraged to start using this system, but it is not yet in widespread use. Usually, the information received does not include descriptions of the courses, only the course title and number. The counselor has to make some assumptions regarding which titles fit with categories and subjects. Sometimes, it's difficult to determine exactly what the course is, simply by looking at the course name and number alone.

The counselor is the key and it's more of an art form than an exact science.

Each district has its own policy regarding partial credits. Generally, the counselor will try to marry partial credits to make at least a half credit, but it isn't always possible. In some districts, there is a group that reviews transcripts and makes decisions. But most of the time the counselor has the final say.

When student's come in as a senior and the graduation requirements from the previous school are different than that of the current school – for example if the previous school only required 22 credits and the new school requires 28 – they will use the graduation requirements of the previous school.

Transfers between districts or from an alternative school to a traditional school are difficult, but it does transfer more easily than from a facility to a public school.

It's helpful if the title is as specific as possible. For example, just a title of "Math" isn't helpful – we need to know whether it's basic math, geometry, algebra, etc.

7. Ellen Hunter – Facility Schools Unit – Review of approaches to graduation requirements and current trends.

Many districts are in the process of changing their graduation requirements. So, they may have multiple sets of requirements as they phase in changes for each graduating class. Alternative schools within a district may have a different approach than the general district in which they are located. Also, it's important to keep in mind that meeting a district's graduation requirements may not guarantee that the student will meet college entrance requirements. For example, a district may not require foreign language to get a high school diploma, but colleges may require foreign language for admissions.

Re-Imagine High School in Colorado – is a Governor's task force report which recommends a shift from seat time to a mastery of content as the criteria for earning a high school diploma. It is a vision for the future, but districts are not doing this yet. The report makes recommendations in six areas – 1) Standards Based Education; 2)

21st Century Curriculum; 3) Assessment; 4) Multiple and Diverse Pathways to a diploma; 5) Career Planning and 6) Post Secondary Alignment.

If the student's post secondary goal is college, then they will need rigor in their course work and the opportunity to meet, not only graduation requirements, but college admissions requirements. But when the report references multiple pathways, it is also referring to kids who may want to go to a technical school or into the workforce. They may not need the same kind of rigor, but will need other kinds of skills to prepare them for the training they will need. Hopefully, kids will stay engaged in school if they believe it is helping them to get where they want to go.

8. Data Collection

CDE will collect summary information about facility schools and the students they serve, such as:

- % of students in facilities who are below grade level in academics
- How many students were issued a diploma from a facility last year?
- How many were issued a diploma from a district while at the facility?
- Do they have information on students who graduated from a district after transitioning back?
- Average Length of stay for each facility
- Age range of students served in each facility
- Where do kids go after leaving the program?
- How many students have more than one intake in a school year?
- Locations of facilities?
- Number of students in each program?
- Numbers, % in high school
- Number of teachers
- Grade levels served

9. Discussion of Issues

- Some of the varieties of situations that present challenges:
 - Kids who have skills but are behind in credits
 - Kids who are short term in the facility – they need to keep up with school work until they transition back
 - Kids who are in one or more facilities for most of the high school years
 - Kids who may have multiple placements but may be out of school in between placements – truant, runaways, etc. – resulting in gaps in credits
 - Kids that are in on-line programs in between facility stays
 - Kids who are homeless – should these students be attending the public school programs?
- Could facilities only focus on Reading, Writing and Math – are they required to provide science and social studies courses?
- Having different ways to earn a high school diploma aside from seat time, especially for students who have the skills, has some merit. Would prefer they are able to get a diploma rather than a GED. Texas has a system of high school diplomas with “Minimal”, “Recommended” or “Distinction” options and different requirements for each.
- Could a diploma be based on mastery of skills and an exit exam be used as one way to demonstrate that mastery?

- Could an assessment and a portfolio be used together for meeting graduation requirements?
- Some schools allow kids to earn high school credit based on scores earned on GED tests or by demonstrating competency aside from seat time.
- Whatever options are allowed, what the student does needs to also be able to translate into a traditional transcript.
- What do we mean by different paths to graduation? Keeping doors open? How divergent are the paths? How long are the doors open? Is every student supposed to have every door open to them after graduation? Or do they need to choose a path sooner?
- Are we going to encourage that students get a diploma from their district of residence whenever possible and a facility diploma is a back-up plan? Or do parents/students get to choose? Or does the facility decide?

10. Philosophical agreements/Core Beliefs/Guiding Principles

We will begin to track agreed on concepts that will be important in measuring the appropriateness or quality of an eventual plan.

- Anything we set up needs to be able to be translated into a traditional transcript.

11. Opportunity for Public Comment

- Stephanie Smith from Family Tree – Gemini
Stephanie recommended that the board consider making recommendations regarding a standard pay scale and paid time off for teachers and paras in facilities. She also asked the board to address the issue of beds for homeless and runaway children. Currently, because these students may not meet the definition of a public placement, the facility is not able to receive PPR funding. But, they are served in the facility school with no funding.
- Jann Clevenger from Excelsior Youth Center
Jan expressed concern about the “twilight zone” – the time in between what we’ve been doing and what we’ll be doing next – the transition process to new requirements.

Meeting adjourned