

# Thornton 205 Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: August 11, 2015

Start Time: 1:15pm

End Time: 3:15pm

Type of meeting: Curriculum Committee/Vision 2016 Facilitator: B. Fickes

Recorder: L. Wilder

## Attendees:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> J. Arrington	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M. Brown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M. Brunson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. Butler
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E. Crayton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> F. Crayton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. Dewitz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N. Graham
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. January	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B. Lawrence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. Manning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. McGill
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> J. Mhoon-Jones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C. Morley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C. Morris	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> R. Penman
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> T. Ratliff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M. Sanders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L. Swopes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y. Thomas
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M. Vhora	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> J. Walton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> T. Webb	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. Willis

## Agenda Item: Presentation by the Illinois Center for School Improvement (ICSI) (PowerPoint Attached)

Time Allotted:

Presenter:

30 Minutes

Dr. Sheila Sherman

## Discussion/Summary

- Dr. Sheila Sherman Liaison the Illinois Center for School Improvement (ICSI) explained how ICSI has done a lot of work within District 205 November 2013.
  - ICSI coaches and help facilitate processes and suggestions based on research that's grounded from field of education and America Institute for research.
- Dr. Sherman informed the District of the current resources and support ICSI offers District 205.
  - Partnership with Ed Leaders Network for training and professional development services are free until 2017

- Dr. Sherman provided a review and explanation of why ISCI first came to the district, because Thornton and Thornridge. ISBE identified the criteria of which schools/districts would qualify to receive priority level services:
  - Based on a three year average the testing scores qualified Thornton and Thornridge to receive priority level services.
  - The State of Illinois recently identified schools that will receive focus level services and Thornwood qualified for the low income subgroup.
  - The low income groups, in addition to low test scores on the assessments, were among the qualifications.
  
- Dr. Sherman explained how the ICSI utilized research from Department of Education.
  - Seven principles were identified as turnaround principles which involved target areas for continuous support along with offering free services.
  - Dr. Sherman also explained how ICSI offers quarterly and continuous coaching all year long.
  - Have a template for the district to use to monitor their goals; we help to monitor to ensure the district is on target with meeting those goals.
  
- Dr. Sherman provided insight on the relationship between District Leadership Team learning Network (DLTLN) and District 205. District 205 has attended 3-4 meetings with other school districts for peer to peer feedback and networking opportunities
  - The purpose of DLTLN is to create strong collaborative leadership and have an intentional data system.
  
- ICSI's goal is to provide assistance with the framework in building the District's capacity data system.
  
- ICSI will assist the district with monitoring the Districts progress (i.e. on a monthly basis).
  
- Dr. Sherman stressed that ICSI is here to help District 205 as often as needed.
  
- Mr. Fickes- Explained how the district is looking to build a system and improve student performance. The goals are to move the Thornton and Thornridge out of priority status and Thornwood out of the focus status. There is also a need for a data system within District 205 and the District is looking into several Data System Companies.

## Agenda Item: Data System "Mastery Connect" Presentation

**Time Allotted:**

**40 Minutes**

**Presenter:**

**Ms. Katherine DuBose**

### Discussion/Summary

- Ms. Dubose explained the purpose of the Mastery Connect Data System and provided some essential highlights of the Data System:
  - The purpose of Mastery Connect is to put data into the teachers' hands.
  - Focuses on the standards and what is taking place in the classroom.
  - Offers parents insight on skills and what their child is learning and can take home.
- Mrs. Mhoon a District 205 parent, commented while the data is focused on the students, the District needs to look into data systems that will analyze teachers.
- Mr. Fickes commented that there are systems in place regarding evaluating the teachers however the suggested method can be considered as well.
- Ms. Dubose explained the tracker screen as the heart and soul of the Mastery Connect system.
  - The tracker screen is filled with assessment data when
  - The students and rosters automatically upload upon the teacher login
  - can export scores information to gradebook
- Ms. Dubose explained how the Mastery Connect Data System is effective in answering the teachers questions such as:
  - What the students know?
  - What the students don't know?
  - What the teacher can do when the student doesn't know?
- Ms. Dubose displayed screens that both the teacher and parent would access
  - The individual student report screen displayed information of what the teacher could see and what the parent would see.
  - The parent screen has the Parent Portal where the parent can login to view the standards to see if their child is reaching those standards and progressing.

- Mrs. Mhoon stated that Mastery Connect gives pertinent information to how the student is doing by tracking and providing progress.
- Mr. Vhora, a District 205 Student Board Member, asked 'if I were to take a quiz in class) when will I know my scores?'
- Ms. Dubose responded that the scores will be available immediately, she demonstrated on the teacher tracker screen how the teachers can see what students are at the Mastery, near mastery and remediation levels.
- Ms. Dubose demonstrated how the scantron sheets from an assessment can be read via camera providing immediate results to the teachers and students.
- Ms. Dubose pointed out another goal of Mastery Connect which is to allow students to take ownership as well as teachers identifying the students who will need intervention for improvement.
- Maria Brown commented that current systems in place makes it difficult to know what areas the students are deficient in however the Mastery Connect tool is a great benefit in providing a specific category where a student is having issues/deficient in learning.
- Ms. Dubose also explained how the Mastery Connect program allows teachers to compare (i.e. mastery levels) and share ideas with their peers to ensure all classrooms are progressing to mastery levels.
- Ms. Dubose demonstrated how the parent can login to the parent screen where it provides their child's progress along with what areas the child needs support.
- Cindy Morris commented that Mastery Connect is a tool for standards based grading.
- Mrs. Mhoon stated that the Mastery Connect system would be a great tool, as she currently uses PowerSchool to monitor her children's academic progress.
- Mrs. Crayton agreed explaining how it can point out the weaknesses and strengths for students, teachers and administrators.
- Andrea January asked 'how does the Mastery Connect system correlate to PowerSchool?'
- Ms. Dubose explained that there is an export option (i.e. exporting scores) to upload the information to PowerSchool.

- Darlene Dewitz commented that there is a Mastery Connect System application available for download (the apps are available on both Apple and Android systems).
- Mr. Fickes asked Ms. Dubose to explain the support Mastery Connect offers regarding professional development for staff, teachers and parents.
- Ms. Dubose responded explaining how Mastery Connect will deliver onsite training, along with an ongoing catalogue of internet courses and 2500 videos to accommodate any training that District 205 needs.
- Mr. Butler commented that the District 205 staff must be supported so that the Mastery Connect system is effective and efficient.
- Dr. Swopes stated that the Mastery Connect tool can support the leadership teams.
- Ms. Dubose demonstrated how Mastery Connect allows teachers to measure student progress with the pre and post assessments to measure progress (by school and by district)
- Tiffany Webb, of School District 150, explained how they use the Renaissance System to analyze data.
- Mr. Fickes asked about the cost of the Mastery Connect System in District 205 Ms. Dubose explained the breakdown of the estimated cost for District 205 \$32,500 for software along with \$10,000 a year for training.

**Agenda Item: Completion of Community Survey (Handout Attached)/ Continued Discussion of District 205's Vision 2016**

**Time Allotted:**

**50 Minutes**

**Presenter:**

**B. Lawrence/B. Fickes**

**Discussion/Summary**

- Mr. Fickes explained that the District needs to agree on if the survey to issue to the community. He asked that all attendees take a look at the survey for review and editing if necessary.

(Attendees Reviewed Survey)

- Mr. Manning questioned if the District can assume that each parent would know what the College and Career STEM and International Baccalaureate programs entail? He suggested that more information be provided by offering a web page link with more information.
- Mr. Penman suggested that the survey offer more generalized questions i.e. “are you in favor of creating specialized high schools in our district?”
- Mr. Thomas agreed with Mr. Penman and suggested that the survey offer an explanation of the programs (1-2 sentences about the program)
- Dr. Sherman asked 'who will be tabulating the survey responses?' Would it be more efficient to purchase a service that can tabulate the responses?
- Mr. Fickes responded that Google Docs and Monkey Pro are ways to tabulate the survey responses
- Mrs. Crayton commented that the link is important in offering information on the STEM and IB programs to better service the community as there are parents who want to know more about the programs District 205 has to offer.
- Mrs. Lawrence asked Mr. Penman 'if the information/results from the survey can be taken from the hard copy of the survey?'
- Mr. Penman responded that the ranking be by letter as opposed to number, so the responses can be grouped accordingly.
- Suggests the ranking responses be on the same page also suggested lettering the responses and ranking from there.
- Mrs. January asked is it possible to incorporate the AVID program within the survey to inform the community?

- Mr. Manning asked if the District was talking about dedicating a whole school to the concept, he warned the District to be careful of how the questions can skew the results.
- Cindy Morris commented that the parents would want to know that the concept and the program is good it's just the transportation that would be an issue, if they like the concept of IB but not the local school the District would want to know that and know the difference.
- Mr. Manning added that parents can be in favor of specified/specialized High School but don't want their child to relocate. He added that the survey should allow parents to specify concerns.
- Mrs. Graham agreed with Mr. Manning that the District is going to have a problem in attempting to specialize the High Schools, she stressed that the District needs to focus on the current programs the District has already and making improvements from there. Parents will not like taking one of the schools and creating a preparatory college.
- Dr. Swopes added that the District is not far from being in jeopardy. The District needs to look into where it stands financially as the District has lost a lot of students. He expressed how specializing the schools can be difficult financially.
- Mrs. Lawrence commented that the District needs to do something different to bring students back. We have a lot of students 1400 students that have left the District for a variety of reasons. The survey is to get the community's feedback as the District will not know what the community wants without getting the feedback.
- If the District does not do anything one of the High Schools will have to close. We must do something innovative to bring the students back, we may not have to close another school.
- Mr. Thomas added that the parents and community needs to know how much of a crises District 205 is in as well as being aware of potential remedies. How will the District communicate this to the community?
- Mrs. Lawrence stated that the District can inform the community that if we do not improve the student population one of the schools will have to close.

- Mr. Manning stressed that the District does not want to scare the community as it may lead to the loss of more students. He suggested that the District highlights the strengths.
- Mr. Crayton commented that the District must present to the public here is where the District is, here is what the Data reflects and here is what we need to do. All questions must be answered.
- Ms. Graham stated that the District already has programs in place and reiterated that the District should expound on the programs that are currently in place as opposed to specializing the High Schools.
- Mrs. Lawrence commented that we need to do something more (other than telling the community about the various programs the District has to offer) to avoid losing students.
- Mrs. Graham expressed concern in making one of the High Schools a STEM, IB, schools. She stated that the community would be in favor of a specialized school but the District may not be able to deliver because of funding.
- Mrs. Lawrence explained how the feeder schools students are not coming into District 205. If the District does something dramatic then that can change.
- Mrs. January suggested that the District do a comparison of with other school Districts to demonstrate the programs District offers compared to other school districts.
- Mrs. Lawrence stated that the District is doing that and it hasn't changed anything.
- Ms. Webb stressed that the parents of future potential District 205 students need to be involved, brought into the schools and District to see what is going on within the schools.
- Mr. Fickes commented that a lot of parents have safety issues and concerns regarding where their child is going to school.
- Mrs. Graham stated that the report card scares a lot of parents regarding the scores and overall grade of the school.
- Mr. Crayton stated that the District needs to be careful with how it presents the changes to the community and that the District needs to be truthful with the community.



- Mrs. Lawrence commented that the District needs to hear from the community. The District doesn't want to make decisions without community involvement. Giving the community hope that if we move forward and do something than this existing problem can possibly go away.
- Ms. Brown questioned the District continuing the same way, as it would produce the same results that resulted in the District being in the position it is in today.
- There are outside educational entities that have looked are looking into one of the District schools and making changes utilizing that school building for their gains, if we allow that to happen than the district will struggle much more than what it is now. If the district knows this why wait sit and wait and see by promoting the same things as it has been.
- Mrs. Lawrence agreed and stated if the District continues to do the same things doesn't do something a charter school will come in and take over.
- Mr. Butler commented that everything that is being said needs to be put together and revisited to reach solutions.
- Mrs. Crayton stated that the District needs to be upfront and honest as the parents know where the district stands and are removing their children. The District Board Goals should be presented to the parents.
- Mrs. Graham stated the Board Goals will be presented during the Board Meeting and posted on the District's website.
- Mr. Fickes stressed that the District can present the board goals online, as well as utilize parent coordinators starting in September going out to the community...he stressed the importance of allowing the District 205 students to display the talent and programs.
- Mrs. Lawrence followed up saying that the District wants to go out into the community starting in October to inform the community of what the District is doing, what the District is thinking about doing and having different staff members present. She suggested on having someone to speak on the financial issues going on in the District.
- Mrs. Brown suggested that the District provide solutions to the current issues District 205 is experiencing, letting the community know that they are stakeholders and the District needs there input.

- Dr. Swopes suggested that there be a recorder present to record the questions being asked to avoid repetitious questions.
- Mr. Manning suggested the District have town hall meetings allowing parent coordinators to bring parents in.
- Mrs. Dewitz pointed out that it is important to have community feedback so they know that their opinion matters. The community needs to know that their opinion and feedback is necessary. The parents must feel empowered and that they are important.
- Mr. Arrington described how the purpose of this survey is to gain information to include the parents. He explained how the survey is allowing parents to be involved and have a say in what is taking place within the District.
- Mr. Crayton stated that the District has talented parent coordinators that can reach out to the community and inform the community of District 205's successful programs and stories.
- Mrs. Lawrence agreed and emphasized that the District needs to have a plan.

**Next Meeting Date: TBD**

