

METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PERRY TOWNSHIP
PEA DISCUSSION MINUTES
September 19, 2013

Attendance: Barb Brouwer, Sue Buscemi, Marth Buehner, Vicki Carpenter, Steve Dawson, Frank Giles, Kyle Hanefeld, David Henriott, Rhonda Jones-Jointer, Neil Linville, Danny Mendez, Leslie Preddy, John Ralston, and Diane Turpen

TAP Update

Kyle Hanefeld stated that occupational therapists question how their current 4.0 evaluation scale will transfer to being rated effective and highly effective categories as compensation is listed in the adopted contract.

Kyle Hanefeld asked, "Where is the Indiana Department of Education with respect to adopting Common Core standards?" Debbie Yates from DOE told MSDPT administrators that there was pause to proceed with Common Core until they look at the assessment aspect, specifically the PARCC Assessment, in more detail. MSDPT should be using transition guides at this time. DOE's perspective is that we are moving ahead with Common Core. Two years from now, we will most likely be following an altered form of the Common Core. Indiana DOE wants a growth model as far as evaluation is concerned. Indiana DOE could use 15% of Indiana Standards with Common Core standards. MSDPT was not clear on this stance from the DOE until this meeting with Debbie Yates.

This year, the individual teacher summative TAP scores will be determined by averaging the four evaluations in each domain area to achieve a summative score and then adding a 5% Professional Responsibility Score. **Domains are weighted as they were last year when looking at individual evaluations:** Instruction 75%, Designing and Planning Instruction 15%, and The Learning Environment 10%. At the end of the year, a Professional Responsibility score (5%) will be added to the overall evaluation average. An example of the responsibility survey is located in the Teacher Hand book on MSDPT PerryPEA.org website. The scores are 5, 3, or 1 and are based on teacher preparation for cluster, attendance, and being on time.

Neil Linville voiced that many elementary teachers feel overwhelmed because they are working very hard to meet the expectations of the TAP evaluation rubric and prepare for and attend TAP meetings. They must spend a lot of time to plan lessons for several content areas for the school day and then spend hours grading to use the data for next lesson. They feel like the planning and grading portions of their teaching positions are being overlooked as emphasis is being placed on preparing for Tap meetings. Further, the teachers believe that Tap is in the forefront of their thinking now, and they should be focusing on kids more than TAP.

Neil Linville states that as teachers discuss TAP with him, he is going to ask teachers "How can we make this better? How can we make the evaluation process better?" He wants to be proactive in finding solutions to these concerns.

Vicki Carpenter said that Dr. Little and Neil Linville discussed getting a group of teachers together to discuss ideas for improving the TAP evaluation process.

Vicki Carpenter stated that it helps teachers if they give Master Teachers as much information and evidence concerning TAP elements in the lesson at the preconference. When the observation is unannounced, the teacher can help the Master Teacher by giving her as much information as possible about the lesson. It is best for there to be communication between the teacher and Master Teacher. **Note: If you are observed, gather and send to the observer as much information you feel is relevant to making your lesson clear. Don't assume anything; even if you feel something is a given, make sure that observer is aware of the information.**

Danny Mendez states that the teachers who do the best in the TAP evaluation process are the ones who are reflective and asking for feedback. A teacher is not going to do well if he sees just the evaluation piece without the growth aspect of the process. There is 15 years of research to support TAP as an effective teacher growth tool. Teachers should ask themselves, "How can I be the best teacher I can be?" The way to improve is to embrace the growth part of the evaluation process. The best teachers just use best practices in the classroom; these practices fall into the TAP aspects.

Neil Linville states that he appreciates what Danny Mendez says about TAP process. However, many teachers are frustrated with the process because 1) many teachers are the former "A" students in classrooms who want the top score and are told to strive for a

3 on the rubric, 2) many are concerned about the financial aspects of TAP results, and 3) how TAP is used if RIF is required. He stated that teachers are never going to buy into “3 is great”.

Uncompensated Leave

Neil Linville stated that the Teacher Handbook no longer has language to cover extended personal illness health leave. A teacher used to be able to go on uncompensated leave to cover cost of benefits until he/she can be approved for disability. Recently, a very ill teacher was going to retire but could not due to loss of benefits. Uncompensated Leave was discussed and changed in the Teacher Handbook to address extended leave maternity situations – a teacher can take a year off uncompensated , but cannot take two years, following the birth of a child. The intent of the changes was not to exclude extended personal illness situations. Neil Linville stated that the above mentioned extended illness situation was handled well by the Human Resources department and Administration. He appreciates this consideration for this teacher and the situation.

Any subsequent extended personal illness situations will be handled in a similar fashion. Neil Linville expressed that language to cover this area in the Teacher Handbook needs to be added and could easily be done by adding one more bullet point under extended leave. Changes and additions to the Teacher Handbook must be taken to the Board of Education and are typically done over the summer. Human Resources will have language in mind for the next Teacher Handbook revision.

Due Process: Student v. Teacher Allegations

In secondary schools more than elementary schools, teachers feel like a student’s word is held in higher regard than the teacher’s word. Neil Linville said that a handful of students have written complaints, the teacher is put on administrative leave, and then it will be investigated whether the teacher was out of line.

Teachers are put on paid leave immediately, which is becoming a common practice. Neil Linville stated that this action sends a message to students, staff members, and, sometimes, the community that the teacher did something wrong. He further stated that the past practice was for there to be proof of teacher misconduct for a teacher to be placed on leave. Every case is different. Different circumstances require different action. If an allegation is brought against teacher, MSDPT has obligation to investigate by talking to the teacher and students separately. Neil Linville states that leave action is being taken too soon. Putting a teacher on leave communicates to some that the teacher is guilty of something even if this is not true. This tarnishes the teacher’s reputation. It also makes the teacher question the support he/she has from the district. Sometimes allegations are false. Nothing happens to the students if allegations are false.

Vicki Carpenter understands what Neil Linville said, but says it is tough. The township has put teachers on leave to protect the accused teacher also since it reduces interaction with the students, particularly the student who has made an allegation, at the time. She also states that we should discipline students who falsely accuse teachers of wrongdoing. MSDPT Administrators need to talk to lawyers about proper handling of situations in which students make allegations against teachers.

Neil Linville asks Administration to think about these situations and agrees that they should talk about them with the lawyers. He is concerned about teachers being put on leave without evidence of wrongdoing because it sends a message that a teacher is in deep trouble. It communicates to students that they can get a teacher in trouble; the issue can be picked up by the media and blown out of proportion, and it can become a point of discussion and speculation for the MSDPT community. He stated that the impression among the teachers is that students’ word is given greater weight than the teacher’s word. He believes that priority should be to protect integrity of teachers.

Barb Brouwer states that she wants the teacher to know what is being said as well. In these situations, she meets with teacher as quickly as possible to tell him about allegations so that the situation doesn’t gain momentum.

Mrs. Jones-Jointer stated that a situation involving student allegations against a teacher is a balancing act. Human Resources and Administration must look at the facts of each case and at what the issue is. They do want to protect the teacher as well as the student. She also stated that putting teachers on unpaid leave for student allegations seems to be the education culture.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Turpen