

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 64

Minutes of the Committee-of-the-Whole:  
Recommendations from Board Advanced Technology Committee  
held at 7:00 p.m. on April 8, 2013  
Hendee Educational Service Center  
164 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge, IL

President John Heyde called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Other Board members present were Eric Uhlig, Sharon Lawson, Pat Fioretto, Scott Zimmerman, and Anthony Borrelli. Also present were Superintendent Philip Bender, Assistant Superintendents Joel T. Martin and Lori Hinton, Director of Technology Terri Bresnahan, Director of Special Education/Pupil Services Jim Even, Director of Facility Management Scott Mackall, Business Manager Becky Allard, Public Information Coordinator Bernadette Tramm, and about 40 members of the public.

President Heyde stated the purpose of the meeting was to hear recommendations from the Board Advanced Technology Committee (BATC). Superintendent Bender noted that the District was in the third year of its five-year Strategic Plan, and that the Board has had several opportunities to learn how District 64 has focused on accelerating the use of advanced technology. He pointed out that the Board most recently had been updated on the plan's current progress in February and had received recommendations from the Math Curriculum Review Committee on curriculum materials in March, and that both presentations had focused on the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning that face our students and teachers. He pointed out that the BATC report would be spread across two meetings, with tonight's presentation reporting the committee's findings and recommendations, and a second report on April 22 to present specific options for pacing and implementation.

Dr. Bresnahan thanked the 28 committee volunteers for their time, expertise and dedication to meet and research for the benefit of District 64, and announced that many were at tonight's meeting and also would present portions of the report. She stated that the foundation for BATC's work is student learning, with a specific focus on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). She noted that 21<sup>st</sup> century learning involves actively engaging students in higher levels of thinking with a focus on critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, innovation, communication and collaboration. She pointed out that technology is a tool that not only enables students to learn in these more challenging ways, but also provides a method for them to communicate about their learning as well.

Dr. Hinton then expanded on how technology is embedded throughout the CCSS, rather than addressed as a separate set of standards. She noted that students must use technology not only to actively seek information, but also to synthesize and apply it. She reaffirmed that technology is critical to students' success as they begin to master the CCSS.

Dr. Bresnahan then described how BATC had conducted its work by reviewing case studies that exemplified the ideals of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning with technology integration, and seeing examples of this type of learning currently happening in District 64.

Instructional Technology Coaches Caroline Schaab from Roosevelt School and Amanda Walsh from Lincoln Middle School then illustrated for the Board with detailed examples from their schools. Dr. Bresnahan noted that BATC members had also read and shared research articles and other best practices as part of their work.

Based on this information-gathering, Dr. Bresnahan related that BATC members had selected five areas for action research, including: 1:1 computing models; Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) models; investigating what computing looks like for early childhood and primary grades; two specific models for learning including inquiry-based learning and “flipped” classrooms; and infrastructure needs. She stated the committee had divided into teams to research, collect data through site visits and investigations, and then shared their findings with the committee as a whole. Dr. Bresnahan noted that BATC also surveyed various stakeholder groups to collect information.

Regarding the 1:1 computing model, Lincoln teacher Franny Keyes then shared the action team’s findings from a site visit to South Berwyn District 100, which has recently completed a rollout for all students in grades K-8 as part of a SMART goal to improve student achievement. Moving to the BYOD area, Dr. Bresnahan reported on the action team’s findings and its visit to Kenilworth District 38, which is in its first year of implementation of a BYOD program for grades 6-8. Franklin teacher Nancy Sweeney then reported on the action team’s findings regarding early childhood / primary grade computing. Washington parent Janice Oliva shared information on learning models developed by her action team and its observations at a site visit to Holy Family School in Palatine that focused on inquiry-based learning. Lincoln parent Kendra Griffin also related the learning models action team’s research on flipped classrooms through its visit to Kenilworth District 38. She pointed out that such classrooms are designed to “flip” the time teachers spend lecturing in class with hands-on work students do applying what they have learned at home. Dr. Bresnahan reported the BATC’s findings on infrastructure, noting that District 64 had begun improving its network and infrastructure in recent years with the future in mind. Carpenter parent Doug Miller then shared the findings of parent surveys, while Lincoln Principal Tony Murray related key information from surveys of students in grades 3-5 and grades 6-8.

Dr. Bresnahan stated that based on its findings, BATC unanimously believes learning in District 64 should be: collaborative, creative, connected to the real world, flexible, differentiated, self-paced, inquiry-based, and integrated with technology. Therefore, Dr. Bresnahan reported that BATC recommends that all students in District 64 have equal access to the digital resources necessary to support 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and the implementation of the CCSS in a 1:1 computing model. Dr. Bresnahan pointed out this is a long-term recommendation and BATC will present recommendations for timing at the next meeting. She noted that three years ago, District 64 would not have been able to bring this type of recommendation forward, but that through professional development and the work of the Strategic Plan, the District now has the capacity and teachers and students are prepared for this next step.

To achieve this 1:1 computing model, Dr. Bresnahan said careful planning will be required as well as a clear understanding of the District’s current state of technology in terms of infrastructure upgrades; systems for productivity and learning such as Google Apps for Education; technology equipment; and professional development especially

over the past two years. She reported that District 64 is currently at about a 1:3.5 ratio for equipment, and the ratio has been dropping every year with increasing resources.

Dr. Bresnahan observed that technology is no longer an option, it is actually a requirement, and that District 64 students as part of CCSS, are not asked to use tools to increase their engagement, rather they actually must use technology to communicate, collaborate and to operate in a digital environment. Dr. Bresnahan stated the plan looks on all these areas and is designed for success by focusing on pedagogy, professional development and infrastructure to support it and follow it through, and that it is not about “the stuff.” Dr. Murray then spoke on the importance of focusing on the transformation in teaching not just looking at technology. He introduced the concept of a 1:world philosophy popularized by futurist Alan November, and stated that District 64’s mission is to focus on learning by connecting students to the world around them through the power of technology.

Dr. Bresnahan then related the committee’s work to identify the right resources that would meet the needs of this vision and meet its selection criteria. Jefferson speech language teacher Barbie Murphy reviewed the committee’s recommendations for grades PreK-2 to be developmentally appropriate and meet the unique needs of learning related to early literacy and numeracy skills. She reported that BATC recommends continuing with the iPad as the primary device for these grade levels. Dr. Bresnahan then reviewed the committee’s thinking in selecting the Chromebook for grades 3-8. She also provided a Chromebook to each Board member to open and operate; the devices were on loan from Maine Township High School District 207, which has announced a multi-year rollout of Chromebooks for its students.

Dr. Bresnahan further pointed out that BATC recognizes that District 64 must continue to support existing devices that help meet the needs of specific classes and software needs. She noted that District 64 will also continue to support the installation of SmartBoards, particularly in elementary schools and in math classrooms at the middle schools, and provide LCD projectors in classrooms where SmartBoards might not be suitable.

Moving to additional considerations, Dr. Bresnahan pointed out the District will need to consider all aspects of a complete technology plan to make this vision a reality, including: infrastructure/personnel support; professional development; support for students and parents; effective management systems for productivity and learning; and curricular impact. In closing, Dr. Bresnahan reported that BATC’s work is founded on the important shifts in the type of learning that District 64 expects students to experience in all of its schools. She stated that BATC would return on April 22 to present specific recommendations on pacing and implementation as well as financial considerations.

Board President Heyde thanked Dr. Bresnahan and the committee, and then opened the meeting for Board member discussion. Several Board members noted they would email further questions to Dr. Bresnahan for response. Dr. Bresnahan and members of the team provided additional clarification and information for Board members on: differences between a Chromebook and a conventional laptop, such as its operating system and memory; the District’s infrastructure needs and timeline to install; bandwidth capacity; potential impact of providing devices on student fees; educational

apps available for Chromebooks compared to iPads; management and security of iPads and Chromebooks; use of Chromebooks for testing; external keypad availability for iPads; privacy and safety concerns to protect students and related filtering systems and usage policies; encouraging students' in person interactions even with 1:1 technology; lifespan for the recommended equipment; and possible timeline for availability of digital textbooks at the elementary school level and student preferences for texts. Regarding survey responses, Dr. Bresnahan offered to make available the open-ended responses to Board members.

Several Board members also pointed out how far the District had come in a short time and the need to move forward quickly on this effort. Board member Zimmerman, the liaison to BATC, suggested that the Board's role should be to focus on how best to facilitate this type of learning, how to support the changes in the educational experience and curriculum, and getting teachers the resources they need to meet these expectations.

Board President Heyde then invited public comment, and noted that the public would have further opportunities to offer input at the April 22 meeting. Comments were received as follows:

- Jon Dombro, an Emerson and Maine South parent, urged the District to continue with the Mac environment rather than switching to Google's Chromebook.
- Committee member Janice Oliva, speaking as a parent, commented that the discussion must be focused not on the device but on the inquiry-based learning style that children need to be 21<sup>st</sup> century thinkers and workers.
- James Dombro, a Maine South student, pointed out benefits of iPads and urged the Board to continue with this device rather than adopting Chromebooks to be aligned with District 207.
- An unnamed gentleman, a teacher, shared his experiences with utilizing Chromebooks in his classroom daily and inquired whether parents or the District would bear the cost.
- Rob Schoenstedt, a parent and member of the Strategic Plan Action Team on Strategy I – Technology, inquired further about how technology would be used in the math curriculum adoption and how the District would establish support and expectations for teachers to use it.
- Committee member Scott Altman, a Washington, Lincoln and Maine South parent as well as a college teacher, commented that the real message is that the process of education and learning is undergoing a revolution.

Board President Heyde thanked the committee for the rich presentation and comments.

President Heyde concluded the Committee-of-the-Whole meeting at 8:59 p.m., which was followed by a short recess before resuming the special Board meeting.

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President

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Secretary