

# Task Force on Student Academic Performance

Hudson City School District – Board of Education

Meeting 1a **MINUTES\*\*\***

July 8, 2009

Hudson High School

Library

1. Open: 6:30PM. By Peter Meyer.... In attendance... Wayne Kinney, Florence Berth, Anne Connor, Jack Howe, Kerri Appelbaum, Shannon Proper, Theresa Nicholson, Annabel Lee.
2. Introductions. We reviewed some of the preliminary results of the "survey" taken by people who attended the "informational" meetings. The review prompted more discussion on issues raised by the survey. See #5 below for a summary of the discussion.
3. REVIEW: The Mandate: PowerPoint, Survey, Handouts. The PowerPoint wasn't done because of technical difficulties.
4. Secretary? No volunteers. P. Meyer takes notes.
5. What should the TFSAP do?

There was some question about whether the Task Force would duplicate what other committees/groups are doing; specifically, the District's School Improvement Team (SIT). Peter didn't think so, pointing out that the Board had also just approved a Curriculum Committee, saying that the Task Force mission was very specific, limited just to improving academic performance. Florence said she would bring an SIT report.

A wide range of issues and challenges were discussed. The following seemed to generate the most interest:

--**Tests and test scores**. There was a great deal of concern about tests, about how they are administered, who writes them (esp. the state tests), about the problem of "teaching to the test." Wayne mentioned that there will be test date changes for the state's ELA, math, Social Science, and Science, so that ALL the tests will be administered in May. Someone mentioned the problem with JLE not administering meaningful tests. The inconsistency in testing is a districtwide problem.

--**The Silo Problem**. The lack of good communication between schools about many issues – from curriculum to tests – is a big problem. There is no curriculum and teacher practices vary from grade to grade, school to school.

--**Scheduling**. Another big problem, with no consistency between schools.

--**Homework.** No consistency between grades, classes, and schools.

--**Low expectations.** Too many teachers expect too little from the kids. Post-meeting email from Anne: I think I raised this and I agree that some teachers and administrators, and even the public, have low expectations for some kids; I would add that the issue also involves some parents having low expectations for their kids, and some kids have low expectations for themselves (although this is likely being fed to them by parents and/or teachers/administrators/the public/their peers). The other thing is that there is sometimes (or maybe frequently - I don't know) a disconnect regarding expectations of particular children among parents, teachers, administrators, and others.

--**Poor Attendance.** This is a big problem and not addressed by the schools.

--**Curriculum.** There doesn't seem to be one.

6. How should TFSAP address the issues?

--Research? Yes.

--Guest speakers? Yes. Visit other, successful districts.

--Surveys? Yes, but done properly

--Let's involve students

--Email is an appropriate way for the Task Force members to communicate.

7. How many meetings in 6 months?

--At least six times, perhaps more.

--Meyer says that the Task Force Report due: January 11, 2010

--Next Task Force meeting suggestion: August 12.

8. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:40.

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\*\*\*These minutes, prepared by Peter Meyer, are not intended to be comprehensive or complete