



Committee minutes

Community Financial Review Committee		
3.16.2015	6:30 PM to 8:30 PM	Brandywine Springs Teachers' Lounge
Meeting called by	Jane Rattenni, Chair	
Type of meeting	Monthly Financial Review	
Facilitator	Larry Miller, Community Member	
Minutes	Laura Palombo, Red Clay	
Timekeeper	Larry Miller, Community Member	
Attendees	Larry Miller, Lynn McIntosh, Community Members; Steven Fackenthall, RCEA Member;	
	Mike Piccio, BOE Member; Jill Floore, Red Clay CFO; Kristine Bewley, Red Clay Manager of	
	Information Systems; Ted Ammann, Red Clay Assistant Superintendent	
Minutes		
	Larry Miller, CFRC Community Member	
Discussion:	A review of the February 2015 meeting minutes. Mr. Piccio moved to accept the minutes and	
	Mr. Fackenthall seconded. The motion carried.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Information Systems		
	Kristine Bewley, Red Clay Manager	
Discussion:	Ms. Bewley gave a presentation on the Information Systems department. See Section I attached.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Referendum Update		
	Jill Floore, Red Clay CFO	
Discussion:	Ms. Floore gave a review of the Referendum results. See Section II attached.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Monthly Reports		
	Jill Floore, Red Clay CFO	
Discussion:	Ms. Floore presented the reports for the end of February 2015. See section III attached.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Announcements		
	Jill Floore, Red Clay CFO	
Discussion:	The next meeting will be held April 13, 2015 in the Cab Calloway School of the Arts Library. The	
	Meeting will begin with a tour of the Cab Calloway Auditorium.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline



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Red Clay Community Financial Review Committee Monday, March 16, 2015

I. Information Systems

Ms. Floore announced that the referendum passed. A large piece of moving forward is the Technology initiative of one to one technology. Ms. Bewley thanked the committee for their continuing support of the Information Systems department and their role in the referendum. They have been focusing on the 21st Century Learning Environment, i.e., one-to-one technology. This all stacks upon applications and our curriculum. The devices support the teachers and their curriculum. Bandwidth is always a concern for schools. We need access points in every classroom and stronger wide-area networks. Most of our schools are set for coverage, but we really need capacity. The referendum will help ensure those access points. We are also applying for eRate funding that will assist in discounting our cost.

Ms. Bewley explained the initiative is not just purchasing equipment or even access points as there is the need for people in the department to support the installation and use of the devices. The device is simply the tool for the curriculum. It will vary from grade level to grade level. Mr. Fackenthall asked if schools would be able to decide by grade level the devices best for them. Ms. Bewley explained that we do need some consistency throughout the district. At this time, we believe there will be a K-2, 3-12 split as a keyboard is needed for testing beginning in 3rd grade, but is not needed in the younger grades. They will be working with the RCEA as well as the curriculum committees. Mr. Fackenthall asked how does IS plan on involving the teachers and administrators in the decision making. Dr. Ammann stated that the RCEA technology committee will have these decisions as their main focus of the group.

Ms. Bewley explained the upfront and recurring costs. Year one our bandwidth costs will be high and then the maintenance costs are recurring costs. The replacement costs would be replacing the devices every 4 years.

Ms. Floore explained that the tax rates work in such a way that putting recurring costs into a proposal remains a fixed amount. We are not able to purchase all of the devices the first year. But the fixed amount is a sustainable amount of money committed to the replenishment of the devices over time. Mr. Miller asked what happens to the devices that are being replenished. Ms. Bewley stated at the end of the 4 year cycle, many are not out of the schools until they are unusable. The teachers always have the newest computers. The older computers are repurposed as student computers in a lab. Student computers, once problematic, are stripped and sent to DOE surplus. Dr. Ammann also commented that some computers cannot be sent to surplus. There is a State contract which strips the computers of their parts. One thing we are looking at now is a home



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component. It is great to have one-to-one in the classroom, but many students do not have access once they are home from school. Many years ago at Warner, we had older computers that were not valuable in the classroom. If a parent came in for training, they could have the computer at home. It was supported at the State level by an AmeriCorps grant. We are looking into that again. Mr. Fackenthall stated that the teachers would be very supportive of that initiative. Mr. Miller asked if they have to verify that they have internet access before taking a device home. Dr. Ammann stated that Comcast has a program that provides discounted internet to students who are receiving free or reduced lunch, called community eligibility. The rules are less stringent now than before and waive back charges owed by the family. There are even options that other groups can cover the cost.

Ms. Floore asked if these devices are exclusively not for take home use or does it go grade by grade. Ms. Bewley explained that these rules are to be determined. Now, we state they do not go home. Appoquinimink does have some devices that do go home, but their program is on a smaller scale. There are also insurance companies that will cover devices that do go home. Dr. Ammann stated that Los Angeles had a take home program, and it did not work well. Many of the private schools do but they are small. Ms. Bewley has spoken with Google regarding a program called Google Classroom that a student can work with offline. So a child wouldn't be able to do research, but could get the assignments at home.

Ms. Bewley explained that they have already had inquiries as to when the iPads will be coming now that the referendum has passed. These iPad programs will be coming as the curriculum and funding allows. Our goal is to go carefully and slowly. We will try to be ahead of the expectations. Mr. Piccio asked if year one is school year 15-16. Dr. Ammann explained that we do not receive these tax revenues until October of 2015. We will try to do some implementation in that year. Ms. Floore added that the referendum plan that was laid out reflected what our community could afford and what they could tolerate in the tax rate increase. Our increase is \$.20, \$.10, and \$.5 for three consecutive years. The first year will replenish our necessary carry forward balance. This is not a change of course. This was the plan all along. Dr. Ammann also stated that there will be a huge roll out that goes along with the devices. Teachers need professional development on their usage. Ms. Floore also explained the teachers will be getting professional development on the new math curriculum. Mr. Miller re-stated that the bandwidth and support will also need to be in place for this expansion. Ms. Bewley is also applying to eRate for the access points in every classroom this summer. Hopefully, many classes will be ready at the start of school. There will be a phase in plan for the grades that matches the curriculum implementation. Dr. Ammann also explained we had funded technology grants in Forest Oak, HB Middle, Highlands and Heritage that piloted programs for these devices. Ms. Bewley also explained that these pilot programs were not all the same devices. We are expecting feedback on what worked best.



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Technology in the K-2 classrooms may be a Smart Table or a cart of iPads for the grade to share. When in full force, we will focus on grades 3, 6 & 9 and then add a grade level each year and then in year 4 start to replenish those we started with. Dr. Ammann explained that the elementary parents would more likely vote for a referendum if it would, in fact, begin in elementary school.

Ms. Bewley stated that in the 20 days since the referendum passed, we've had biweekly meetings with the curriculum staff to make sure the applications needed are ones we can support. We are meeting with teachers through the technology work group. Ms. Bewley and Dr. Ammann attended a Google conference in Washington, DC. The State has selected Schoology as their Learning Management System (LMS). They are offering it to all districts at a discounted rate. This is the same LMS that our district had favored in the beginning therefore that is the direction we believe we will be going. State pilots have gone well. It interfaces with eSchool which we already use. Dr. Ammann explained that this system is the vehicle for getting curriculum out. Part of signing a curriculum contract would be the allowance of us loading the materials onto Schoology. The parent and students don't see that portion. However, if a child was absent, they would be able to pull up the lesson and/or any videos, etc. that were part of that lesson. Smart board lessons would be available as well as informal assessments. Mr. Fackenthall stated that this is a resource for teachers to obtain the materials. Dr. Ammann also stated it would be a clearing house of teacher-submitted programs that other teachers could access. We did have Schoolnet 15 years ago, a similar program before its time.

Ms. Bewley stated that our next steps will be to coordinate funding within departments. We will digitize the curriculum using Schoology. Ms. Floore stated that it is not only coordinating funding but we can restructure our funding into leases for example. We don't want to lease all at one time as then they expire simultaneously, but it does give flexibility. Ms. Bewley explained the professional development. Some teachers did one-to-one grants last year and they did very well. We need to get the teachers who are more hesitant on technology in the classroom to get the professional development needed to use the devices and LMS. Mr. Fackenthall also added that "meaningful" professional development was important. Ms. Bewley stated that some of PD will be heard before. But we have to present it all. Dr. Ammann added that the RCEA committee is so important in giving the IS department feedback on what works and what more is needed.

The hardware selection is the last thing that is decided. All of the access points and curriculum will be in place prior to this selection. Mr. Fackenthall asked about grades 3, 6 and 9, will that be pilot groups or all students. Ms. Bewley explained it will be across the district with every student with a device. It hasn't been decided that that the device stays with the homeroom or does the child carry it with them through the day. Dr. Ammann explained that there is a discussion that some of the third grade teachers are not ready the first year, therefore, you should begin with the fourth or fifth grade teachers in those schools. The problem with that, however, is that you want to make sure there is consistency across the district. If we do it by grade level, we can save on the PD effort.



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Rolling out a curriculum for a grade, we will combine the particular curriculum training with the technology training for that specific curriculum. University of Delaware has a research and development center that may do a review of those piloted classrooms, speaking with teachers and parents as to what worked. It cannot be completely anonymous either. We need to know why it worked in one school and not another. We did have concerns from teachers who had the devices then asking the IS department how to incorporate it into their lessons. Mr. Piccio asked what happens when that teacher is out. Dr. Ammann talked about having substitutes who cannot use these tools will be an issue. There is no solution at this time. Lesson plans need to be in place in any event. Mr. Miller explained technology is the methodology to deliver the curriculum. If one teacher is less proficient than another, that teacher has the same requirement of teaching and achieving the goals. Therefore, a parent whose student is in the classroom with less use of the technology vs. more use, they may perceive that their student is not getting the best instruction. Dr. Ammann spoke to that issue and how each teacher uses the technology at different levels.

Mr. Miller thanked Ms. Bewley and Dr. Ammann for their presentation.

II. Referendum Update

Ms. Floore gave an update on the 2015 Referendum. It has been 20 days since the referendum passed. We passed by 800 votes. Not as wide a margin as we had hoped, but still a positive outcome. Christina was not successful in passing. It was a long road and we started educating the public in August 2014. Since the Referendum, there have been several complaints about election activities and the district met with an investigator from the Attorney General's office. Ms. Floore listed other complaints included events at the schools, no parking, and rumors of voting twice. The district responded to all questions and stands by our efforts and is saddened by accusations. The main concern is efforts in the future to make the referendum process even more difficult for districts. It is not a good state for education or children to have our community divided on what is best for students. Ms. McIntosh asked regarding the Governor's threat to take away the senior tax exemption and did it hurt our vote. Mr. Miller answered that it didn't help.

The future of funding will tie directly into the recommendation of the Wilmington Task Force. The Task Force has recommended that Red Clay take over the Christina city schools as well as the Colonial students who reside in the city, but will our Red Clay community support it? We don't know what the financial implications are at this point. Mr. Miller stated if you change the funding mechanism for students at risk, you can work this through. Mr. Fackenthal stated that idea was mentioned several times in the Delaware Forum. Ms. Floore stated the real concern is redistributing funds which would pit an already divided community against itself. We don't have "extra" resources in the suburban schools. Mr. Miller explained that at risk students need to be reached at the earliest stages and mentored throughout their school years. Why would anyone want to



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be a teacher when we haven't received a state pay raise in years? The salaries aren't competitive with the private sector.

Ms. Floore does not know at this time the assessment value of the city property involved and how it correlates to the K-12 students that will be coming to Red Clay. We also don't know the legality of the process at this time. Mr. Miller asked about the delinquency rate. Ms. Floore stated that the delinquency rate is the same as it is in the same County. New Castle County has a 99% collection rate. Foreclosure processes are in that calculation as well. At this time, however, it is unconstitutional for the State legislature to redraw district boundaries. Mr. Miller asked how it will be done by June. Ms. Floore stated that the State code states it has to be done by a referendum by the people.

III. Monthly Reports

Ms. Floore presented the February 2015 expenditure report. At this time of the year, we should be at 58.3% as a target on the expenditure side. We are 99% collected at local funds. We have \$521,000 outstanding. That is not simply delinquent taxes but the senior tax credit that will be coming to us from the State. Mr. Fackenthall asked if you are late on taxes, are you fined. Ms. Floore explained there is a penalty.

The percent actual to budget right now is 86.75% slightly behind last year due to indirect costs that have not been recouped this year. We have many different grants and each has an indirect component.

Expenditures are 61.4% expended and 64% expended and encumbered which is slightly behind. The end of May we will look to have the majority of budgets expended. Special Education is at 119% expended and encumbered. That will go down next month. We receive related services units that we cash in for contracts. We have not applied that cash in at this time. Mr. Fackenthall asked if those are units we cannot identify. Ms. Floore stated, no, we earn related services units based on population of special education students just like we earn academic excellence units for the general population. We earn about 35 related services units but we are unable to hire that many full time staff members. Those therapists prefer working for contracted services as they set their hourly rate and hours rather than being a State/district employee. Vendors are very competitive in hiring therapists.

This Committee will meet next month at Cab Calloway. Dr. Ammann's department is preparing a major capital update on which of our projects are completed or nearing completion. There will be information on new projects and how the money comes in through debt service bond sales. Typically in April, we have Debbie Roberts speak to us regarding the federal grants. However, the federal programs have been extended to August 1, 2015. Therefore we have many grants that are not expended at this time. Does this committee want an update now of where we stand. July is the tax rate and August is



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the budget. We could ask her to speak in May. When would the committee like to see this presentation if we want it at all. Ms. Floore feels it is an important piece of information for the committee. Unfortunately, our current Manager of Federal Programs, Malik Stewart, will be leaving us and a new manager is being sought. Mr. Miller feels May makes more sense, Mr. Fackenthall agreed.

Ms. McIntosh asked about Race to The Top that was not extended. The parent involvement that had an end date of 2013 and is 85% expended. Ms. Floore explained that is the close out figure. Our goal is not to give back money, but in this case, it wasn't used as we didn't want to use it unwisely.

The entire grant system for the consolidated grant, our federal programs, is being changed to a new system for processing federal funds this year. With Mr. Stewart leaving, it will give the new Manager a chance to start from the very beginning.

Tuition programs were 92.49% received. These are tuition payments due to us from other districts for special education students in our programs. In the consortium program we are over expended as we are reimbursed for transportation at the end of the school year. First State School we are watching closely. It is at 94% expended and encumbered with 79% expended. That is our contract with Christiana Hospital for our students there. They have had some staff transition as well as have increased our number of students that can participate in the program to 24. That does get billed back to the district of the student who attends as it is not strictly a Red Clay attended school. These are students with such high medical needs that they cannot be served in a regular school setting.

Minor Capital is 4.8% expended looking toward what projects are slated for the summer. The presentation next month will speak to that as well as a comparison as to what was spent in prior years.

Debt service is right on schedule.

Tuition programs 54 and 58 are slightly ahead of schedule and where we were last year. The reasons are due to costs for substitutes for our para professionals from Delta T. At local salaries are at 59% on target. State salaries are slightly higher than last year and we are investigating that. Part of the disparity is due to the number of special education students who are funded more heavily by tuition funds.

We are over budget on insurance. We switched to a new company this year and the rates are slightly higher than budgeted. The new carrier is still 20% lower than what our renewal rate with the former carrier would have been. We were with Utica and now we are with Liberty Mutual. The majority of school districts were represented by Utica. None of those districts stayed with them, but moved as a block over to Liberty Mutual. Brandywine and Vo Tech have a separate carrier.



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Each high school sells tickets to their sporting events and performances. This money is deposited into the state financial system into the fund of Gate Receipts. AIHS has a higher balance in gate receipts than the other schools. Every year, Ms. Floore enters into the budget a placeholder of how much each school will spend from their gate receipts. Dickinson and AIHS had \$17,000 and McKean was \$16,000. Just because AIHS spent \$18,000 doesn't mean they were over budget but that they collected more and spent more than we listed as the budget. They can only spend what they collect. The money is spent on field upgrades or a new stage curtain; something that pertains to why the money was collected.

We are meeting with Kelly Services tomorrow regarding our substitute teacher contract with them. There is some concern that with the Affordable Health Care Act the costs for these substitutes will rise. The Affordable Healthcare Act states that a company must offer healthcare to an employee with 30 hours or more a week. We currently do not offer that to long-term substitute teachers. We don't have a unit, so we cannot make that temporary employee a full-time employee. We are working with Kelly to see how to work that out. With the referendum, we were working to have a full-time interventionist in all of our elementary schools. We are working on an RFP for that. Mr. Fackenthall asked if that was outside the regular interventionist. Ms. Floore explained that the current interventionist currently works 29 hours a week. That is not effective as they are needed working with students after school as well as lunch duty with students with the highest needs. There are behavior specialists who are highly certified working with the schools that are paid from IDEA special education funding. These interventionists are working with a "time out" room or detention.

IV. Announcements

Our next meeting will be held at the Cab Calloway School of the Arts Library on Monday, April 13, 2015 at 6:30 PM. We will meet in the lobby for our tour of the new theater and then continue to the library for the rest of our meeting.

There have been no public inquiries to the CFRC.