



**Special Meeting Minutes, SCS Board of Directors**

**July 27, 2017**

**FINAL**

**I. Special Meeting Agenda**

- A. Call the Meeting to Order, Roll Call

The Sherwood Charter School Board of Directors met in the SCS Art room for a special meeting on Tuesday, July 25, 2017.

Audio of the meeting was not recorded. The July 25, 2017 meeting was called to order at **6:30 PM** by Chair Brian Craker.

**Members present:** Brian Craker, Perry Francis, Chris Gerlach, Carolyn McBee, Frank Scholz, and Joy Raboli (ex officio)

**Members absent:** Steve Schweitzer

**SCS Staff present:** Katie Boedigeimer (middle school math), Sarah Landels (4<sup>th</sup> grade),

**Public present:** Ben Davis, Gail Wallace

- B. Agenda Additions - NONE

- C. Curriculum Committee Report

Several curriculum committee members were in attendance – Katie Boedigeimer, Sarah Landels, Perry Francis, Carolyn McBee, and Joy Raboli (not present - Jan Zobrist, Anna De Salvo, Sarah Richards). Chair Craker mentioned that he empowered the committee members have voice at this meeting.

Ms. Raboli described the process the committee followed. They had met twice first to apply the Comprehensive Literacy Model rubrics (attached as an Appendix to these minutes) to Riggs and IEW (Excellence in Writing) as well as perform research about literacy curriculum options replacement options.

Comprehensive K-12 Literacy Model components:

- 1) Authentic Reading & Writing
- 2) Critical Thinking
- 3) Purposeful Instruction
- 4) Guided Reading and Writing
- 5) Intentional Independent Reading & Writing
- 6) Modeled Reading & Writing
- 7) Purposeful Speaking and Listening
- 8) Shared Reading & Writing
- 9) Word Study

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The committee’s analysis of Riggs showed it was lacking in many of the required components as was IEW. The Riggs report was submitted to the board. The committee then moved to finding curriculum models that might meet those nine criteria. The committee researched public and private schools and brought back several models. One model that all the committee members independently discovered was the Lucy Calkins Reading <http://www.heinemann.com/unitsofstudy/reading/default.aspx>.

Brian asked Ms. Raboli to discuss the lower-level topics of curriculum for the newer members.

Frank Scholz asked where did the nine reading model components come from? Ms. Raboli answered from national reading association tenants and best practices of colleges and universities and highlighted one piece of this model that she thinks in very important - books fascinating to read! Riggs is good for some things – phonics – but we at SCS need to go there and beyond. In addition, Ms. Raboli stated that SCS already has the Lucy Calkins Writing component curriculum in storage as it was purchased a few years ago. Some wondered if it might be out of date or need updating? Ms. Raboli suggested that the tenants of the curriculum have not changed and that we will accentuate the curriculum nonetheless. Additionally, as the curriculum is in house SCS does not have to spend money to purchase.

Someone asked, what about the spelling curriculum? Riggs included phonics, spelling and handwriting. Some potential spelling curriculums:

- Spelling Mastery – rigorous like Riggs (looking to get a price).
- Moby Max – personalized spelling program (SCS has access already)



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Ms. Landels also mentioned that the Lucy Calkins curriculum offers coverage for 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade while Riggs does not.

Ms. Raboli also mentioned that standardized test scores have dropped for SCS, similar to what she had mentioned in past meetings. This result reflects to students not having exposure to a lot of different texts and love of reading. The new curriculum will employ actual, real books and not basal readers as is espoused by other curriculums.

Chris asked how the new Calkins curriculum will align with Smarter-Balanced test. Ms. Raboli replied that writing is a challenge for our school – the current K-8 program is dry – saying we need more ‘meat’ to our reading and writing programs as they are showing deficiencies. Reading and writing program scores are showing deficiencies.

Brian mentioned the point that Riggs is important to the families of our school as there were several concerns raised by families in communications (letters and survey). There are difficulties but there are also benefits to Riggs and IEW.

The ‘Big things’ that are experienced by SCS families and Riggs:

- New students transferring into our school coming into the Riggs program (and current classes upon reemphasis of Riggs two years ago) showed a higher than average turnover though the year.
  - o Ms. Raboli – Assimilating with Lucy Calkins is much easier than when compared to Riggs as each student picks books familiar and comfortable to them.
- Significant difficulties implementing and learning Riggs with parent/teachers/students – There are potential difficulties exposing a new curriculum now and how much?
  - o Ms. Landels – Riggs-happy students might have difficulties learning something new (typical change in curriculum) but the benefits outweigh the negatives.
  - o Ms. Raboli – inexpensive curriculum but expense comes from purchasing books to compliment curriculum. We want teachers to have curriculum changes in hand before school starts (and like we didn’t do as well last time). We can use Riggs components that work well going forward.
  - o Carolyn – Lucy Calkins has been around for a long time. Riggs is from the later 70’s but was not updated as often.

Teachers will manage this curriculum – more work for them but the teachers are up to it. Teachers take notes and lists during the school day about what to do tomorrow – management & assessment. Riggs or other canned programs do not offer the same level of quick feedback.



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Chris asked what kind of teacher training is needed? Ms. Raboli will contact the appropriate people with Lucy Calkins to determine for structure of the setup, call Lucy Calkins help. Carolyn thinks this is exciting since teacher will have a lot of input in implementing curriculum.

Ms. Raboli mentioned that the nine components of literacy known during teacher interviews in past years but none knew of Riggs.

Brian mentioned that he and his family enrolled their oldest son because of Riggs (rigor is important and a level of achievement is gained from the rigor). Will making a curriculum change allow us to continue to meet those rigorous expectations as parent? Moby Max seemed to help in addition to Riggs.

Ms. Raboli said that we were not meeting expectations now with Riggs as for example TAG kids are bored now. Middle school kids are doing well with any program but are losing love of reading. It is a misnomer that Riggs is as good as it proposes to be. The short answer is yes, the new curriculum will be as rigorous or more rigorous. TAG kids are two grade levels higher than they are now.

Brian definition of rigor was discussed by the board in previous years as 'finding balance of effort that yields best result'. Handwriting and spelling seem to be of a lower level with the new curriculum. Handwriting work needs proficiency but not spending hours a week doing so as Riggs seems to suggest (the Riggs program suggests that handwriting as child should look like handwriting from a textbook).

Chris asked if Lucy Calkins has tests or assessments done to measure progress. Ms. Raboli said that there is feedback daily and lots of assessments too. Additionally, teachers meet with students frequently. With Dibels K-letter recognition was a problem (Riggs does not do recognition).

Perry mentioned a concern about the assessment part going forward and whether the time the teachers need to spend more time accessing and if it would affect teaching. Ms. Raboli suggested it would not distract away from their basic teaching level and work out to be an improvement overall.

Brian asked how does homework change for elementary? Ms. Raboli suggested that reading, spelling, math homework would continue but homework will not be painful and instead be more meaningful for students and not a painful chore. Spelling can be nimbly managed with either of the two approaches envisioned now. There is also no need for parent training to help with homework as there was with Riggs.

Ms. Raboli suggested the board study rigor this year and examine what homework means under this curriculum system. She suggested that being 'hands on' is what rigor is for school, using describing what a river is as an example. We want the students to be immerse themselves into a subject area and



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in the end, know all aspects of a 'river' and how they are going to what are you going to do with your knowledge. Parents say their kids do all homework but Riggs is difficult to complete for some given its somewhat obscure nature for some, especially the markings.

There is power involved in finding the right curriculum that aids the teachers completing their job.

Chris relayed a point she learned from her research about Riggs and its use in education. Riggs use in other schools and successes (10 schools). Out of 10, two schools opted out of state testing. 50% scored poorly (in literacy), three schools better than average (but lower than like school average) and then there is SCS – it performed the highest – in the top 10 (while noting two of the schools had closed down in the past year) in like demographics.

Ms. Landels suggested that teachers at SCS are ready for a change. Other teachers say Lucy Calkins is a lot of work but worth it overall. Ms. Raboli wanted to add that for the record she has talked about finding high performing curriculum and Lucy Calkins is just that type of curriculum.

Brian asked the board if we needed more time to discuss or are we ready to vote on the change of curriculum?

Unfortunately, because of his status as a new board member, Frank has not yet been added to the SCS board Dropbox setup and has not reviewed the materials and does not then feel he has enough information to decide now on the suggested curriculum change. Brian apologized for Frank not having access to the SCS board Dropbox but he had turned off his SCS email after the June board meeting in an effort to refresh himself for the upcoming new academic year. In that he missed downtime he missed that situation. Brian also mentioned that Steve was not able to attend this meeting because of work obligations and would like him to have a chance to weigh in on the change if possible.

Concerning timing, this week is closest and nearly last time to order the materials so as to have in the hands of teachers returning to school for training in August and the ordering deadline is the main reason for this special meeting. The cost is only \$1700 (though mentor texts still need to be purchased at a yet to be determined amount). Lucy Calkins can act as a supplement if it is not the main curriculum which is the intent on choosing a new curriculum. The board could vote to move forward and use Lucy Calkins as a resource.

Someone on the board asked if we need Lucy Calkins trainers to come to help implement the curriculum? Ms. Raboli replied that it would be nice to have an attending trainer but if not we can figure out how to complete the training some other way as there are online tools too.

For tonight, there seems two ways forward:



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- (1) Decide to approve a change in curriculum to Lucy Calkins tonight or
- (2) Use Lucy Calkins as resource

[There was general discussion relating to waiting with several of the members suggesting they were ready to make a decision tonight while understanding the need for caution given Frank could not in good conscience vote for or against the change and Steve was not present. The deciding factor was a mention by Chris that spending the monies to purchase the curriculum even as a supplement was tantamount to approving the curriculum.]

Frank suggested he can abstain for the vote and is okay with board deciding to adopt curriculum, especially given the order-related timing and the fact that the board has discussed and reviewed the curriculum changes in detail. Carolyn also reminds board that the administrative committee's message be given full precedence too. Ms. Raboli also mentioned that the teachers' survey results showed high dissatisfaction with the current curriculum.

**Agenda Business Item: Adopt the Lucy Calkins reading curriculum**

**Motion by – Frank Scholz**

**Seconded by – Carolyn McBee**

**Discussion:** none

**Board Vote:** four ayes; **motion passes with one abstention (Frank Scholz)**

**Agenda Business Item: Adopt Lucy Calkins writing curriculum**

**Motion by – Carolyn McBee**

**Seconded by – Chris Gerlach**

**Discussion:** none

**Board Vote:** four ayes; **motion passes with one abstention (Frank Scholz)**

D. Next Regular Meeting: **Thurs. Aug. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**Agenda Business Item: Adjourn meeting at 7:59**

**Motion by – Brian Craker**

**Seconded by – Carolyn McBee**

**Discussion:** none

**Board Vote:** all ayes; **motion passed unanimously**

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Recording and submission of minutes completed by Board Secretary, Perry Francis.  
(Minutes approved September 21, 2017)



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**Appendix**

**Comprehensive K-12 Literacy Model**

This literacy model reflects current research and best practices for teaching literacy. It is essential that all teachers, at all levels, in all content areas utilize this model as a foundation for instruction.

Resources that can support effective literacy instruction include the following: library media staff, instructional coaches, building principals, and district specialists.

**Planning** is carefully determining the educational purpose, the approaches, and the resources to be used in focused instruction, interventions, and assessments.

**Instruction** is providing a variety of approaches and strategies in order for learning and understanding to occur.

**Intervention** is a systematic, focused, and differentiated approach for providing additional and graduated instruction for students who demonstrate academic performance greatly above or below the expected level of achievement.

**Assessment** is both formally and informally collecting evidence of learning to be used in evaluation.

**Evaluation** is thoughtfully judging the evidence gathered from assessments for the purpose of making decisions regarding planning and instruction.

**Authentic Reading** is reading a variety of text for real purposes. Authentic reading is most like that which occurs in everyday life.

**Authentic Reading** includes: • reading that is meaningful, relevant, and useful to the reader; • supporting readers with a print-rich environment; • providing choice within a variety of forms and genres; • having the opportunity to interact with others in response to the text; • focusing on communicating ideas or shared understandings; • providing authentic meaning-making experiences: for pleasure, to be

informed, or to perform a task.

**Authentic Writing** is writing for real purposes and real audiences. Authentic writing is writing that is most like that which occurs in everyday life.

**Authentic Writing** includes: • writing that is meaningful, relevant and useful to the writer; • supporting writers with a print-rich environment;

• providing choice within a variety of forms and genres;



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- understanding that the writing process is recursive;
- having the opportunity to interact with others in response to text. **Critical Thinking** is making judgments that are thoughtful and well-founded. It is more than opinion; critical thinking is evaluating text and constructing meaning from it. **Critical Thinking** includes:
  - being a strategic reader;
  - using higher level thinking strategies such as predicting, making connections, inferring, and synthesizing;
  - using metacognitive strategies to develop reflective thinking;
- distinguishing between fact and theory. **Purposeful Instruction** is a practice in which the teacher deliberately explains and demonstrates the invisible processes, knowledge and skills used in effective reading and writing. **Purposeful Instruction** includes: • explaining, modeling and thinking aloud by the teacher; • providing instruction while students listen and observe; • making the invisible thought processes visible for students. **Guided Reading and Writing** are instructional practices in which teachers can re-teach or reinforce a specific skill or strategy with a group of students who have similar needs. **Guided Reading** includes:
  - allowing students to practice reading silently before discussing or reading aloud to the group;
  - providing an environment where students can work towards independence with support and feedback;
  - choosing texts that specifically meet the needs of the learner;
  - creating flexible groups, as needed. **Guided Writing** includes:
    - providing an environment where students can work towards independence with support and feedback;
    - choosing objectives that specifically meets the needs of the learner;
    - using other texts as models (e.g., professionally authored, teacher created or student created text);
  - creating flexible groups, as needed. **Intentional Independent Reading** is providing regular opportunities for students to apply strategies that the teacher has taught during previous





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instruction. **Intentional Independent Reading** includes:

- teaching students to choose appropriate texts based on student interest, level, and purpose;
- monitoring student's ability to demonstrate understanding of texts;
- providing feedback based on observation. **Intentional Independent Writing** is providing regular opportunities for students to apply strategies that the teacher has taught during previous instruction. **Intentional Independent Writing** includes:
  - teaching students to choose topics appropriately related to current instructional focus;
  - monitoring students ability to demonstrate application of strategies previously taught;
  - using other texts as models (e.g., professionally authored, teacher created or student created text);
- providing feedback based on observation. **Modeled Reading** is an instructional practice in which the teacher models, verbally, to the students a reading process or strategy. **Modeled Reading** includes:
  - reading text aloud to students while they listen and observe;
  - demonstrating, through thinking aloud, the use of reading strategies, as well as

pausing to discuss these strategies; • introducing students to strategies that proficient readers use; • engaging students as listeners while developing background knowledge, increasing comprehension skills, and fostering critical thinking.

**Modeled Writing** is an instructional practice in which the teacher models, both visually and verbally, to the students a writing process or strategy.

**Modeled Writing** includes: • introducing students to strategies that proficient writers use; • using other texts as models (e.g., professionally authored, teacher created or student created text); • demonstrating, a writing process while students listen and observe; • verbalizing, by thinking aloud, the process that happens during the writing, related both to content, process, and craft.

**Purposeful Speaking and Listening** is the foundation of reading and writing development in which students, formally and informally, comprehend, express, and exchange ideas for a variety of authentic purposes.



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**Purposeful Speaking and Listening** includes: • making relevant statements and asking questions; • listening actively and responding; • sharing personal connections related to the topic; • elaborating and explaining.

**Shared Reading** is an instructional practice in which the teacher both reads the text aloud and interacts with students.

**Shared Reading** includes:

- providing a text that is available visually to both teacher and students;
- reading a text with the teacher taking the lead, and the students following along either silently or orally;
- sharing the responsibility of reading and thinking among the teacher and students;
- engaging in discussions about the strategy or process being taught.

**Shared Writing** is an instructional practice in which the teacher demonstrates composing a piece of writing while interacting with students discussing and adding to the strategies or processes being modeled.

**Shared Writing** includes: • composing a text collaboratively, with ideas from both teacher and students; • using other texts as models (e.g., professionally authored, teacher created or student created text); • engaging in discussions about the strategy or process being taught, while modeling.

**Word Study** is the active teaching of words and their meanings within authentic reading and writing experiences.

**Word Study** includes:

- building a word-rich environment which allows for incidental and intentional learning of words;
- developing students vocabulary through intentional instruction using a variety of strategies and tools;
- studying spelling patterns in words such as rhyming, root words, suffixes, prefixes;
- providing opportunities for beginning readers to develop phonics and phonemic awareness.



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We have started the process to evaluate our current programs with this model to see if we need to change or add to our curriculum. At our first meeting, it was clear that Riggs and Excellence in Writing does not come close to being a comprehensive model. We will compare Riggs and Excellence in Writing to other curriculum that we research and bring to the team and have a complete evaluation of all materials. The next step is to determine which resources are a fit for SCS, how much they cost, what training we may need and scheduling that training in the two weeks in August.