

Curriculum Liaison Council
Wednesday, December 4, 2019
6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at Phoenix Middle School
Worthington Schools, Academic Achievement and Professional Learning



Role of the Council Members:

- Provide representative input to identify key issues and/or topics impacting the quality of education provided to Worthington students.
- Serve as a key communicator in conveying information from their building to the Council as well as information from the Council to their building.
- Provide input in developing parent and community engagement opportunities regarding the issues/topics identified by the SEC.
- Be familiar with the district website, key contacts, and other sources of information regarding curriculum, programs, funding, and buildings.
- Attend all meetings.

Guiding Principles:

Be respectful of the time. Arrive on time, start on time, end on time, make good use of the time.

Represent your building voice rather than individual issues or concerns; share what you learn.

Be present, both physically and attentively.

Be engaged.

Listen.

Share and allow others to share.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions (6:30-6:45 p.m.)

2. Learn more about...

- a. *The Worthington Academy and Phoenix Middle School* with Principal, Sean Flynn (6:45-7:20 p.m.)

<https://www.worthington.k12.oh.us/worthingtonacademy>

<https://www.worthington.k12.oh.us/Domain/12>

<https://www.phoenixms.org/>

- b. *Linworth* with Director, Chris Hasebrook and School Counselor, Laura Zelch (7:20 - 7:40 p.m.)

<https://www.worthington.k12.oh.us/Domain/10>

- c. *English Learner (EL) Program* with Teacher-Leader, Ben Rule (7:40 - 8:00)

<https://sites.google.com/a/wscloud.org/english-learners/>

3. AFTGOTO

- a. State of the Schools will take place at Worthington Kilbourne High School on Wednesday, February 26, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. Our CLC will meet in the WKHS Library at 6:15 p.m. for a short meeting while enjoying pizza and salad.

In Attendance:

Kristen Klopfer (Colonial Hills), Robert Strouse (Evening Street), Tesa Williamson (Granby), Chris Zircher (Slate Hill), Stephanie Fojas (Sutter Park), Amy Featherstone (Wilson Hill), Leigh Edwards (Worthington Hills), Tasha Addy (Worthington Park), Aimee Wellejus (KMS & TWHS), Rebecca Billingslea (McCord), Carolyn Justus (Worthingway), Sean Flynn, Robert Estice, Beth Cullinan and Clare Volz (Phoenix & Worthington Academy), Chris Hasebrook, Laura Zelch (Linworth), Charlie Minister and Savita Jani (Phoenix students), Katie (former Phoenix & Linworth student), Anna McNabb, Cheyenne Fleurantin, Michael Bontrager and Milo Browne (Worthington Academy students), Maddie Witherup (Linworth student), Jennifer Best and Julie Keegan (Board of Education), Margie Toy (PTAC), Neil Gupta, Kim Brown, Kelly Wegley, Brian Geniusz, Tom Kaczmarek, Ben Rule, Kathy Riebel (WEC).

MEETING NOTES

Welcome: Neil Gupta

Neil welcomed all of the CLC members, students, teachers and staff attending the meeting tonight. He shared how sorry Angie Adrean is not to be able to attend tonight due to an injury, sending good thoughts Angie's way! Everyone introduced themselves and what building they are from.

Phoenix Middle School and Worthington Academy with Principal Sean Flynn

This is Sean's first year at Worthington and he feels fortunate to be here. He asked students and staff to come to the meeting and share their experience at Phoenix and Worthington Academy, what a day in their life is like at school.

- **Beth Cullinan and Phoenix Middle School**

- In February of 2006, Phoenix was chosen among 4 programs, to begin in August of the same year! Beth Cullinan and Robert Estice are the only two remaining from the original staff. Phoenix was designed to balance the district and population.
- The staff's job was to continue teaching while meeting with all of the district's 6th graders to tell them about Phoenix and get some to attend.
- When Perry merged with McCord in 2009, Phoenix was then able to spread out.
- Phoenix accepts 84 students every year, a cross section of our district. Typically they have 140-160 applicants.
- The students that came to Phoenix wanted something different in their education; it's about students having a voice.
- Student Charlie Minister spoke first, his brother attends Phoenix and he also decided to attend. He feels safe to share things here that he probably wouldn't elsewhere, he likes the smaller environment, knows these are students that care about learning and chose to go here. So far it's been very good for him, he feels more involved in every sort of school activity.
- Savita Jani spoke next, her older sister attended, so she also came here and loved it! She talked about student voice/student choice, they accomplish that with forum, they have a meeting run by the students with the entire student body, it's an excellent way to communicate with everyone. Students choose what they want to do, and she likes the freedom and the choice.
- Katie spoke last, she was in the 2nd class at Phoenix! Initially she was very excited, she was one of those kids that asked tons of questions. She loved Phoenix and is now a garden educator, works for a non-profit in Columbus. Although not a classroom teacher, she does work with kids and believes the social/emotional learning that happens at Phoenix is key to development. Had hands on learning and democratic options which allowed her to do more things in a basic college program. Phoenix allowed her to be on fire about learning and carry it throughout her entire life.

- **Robert Estice and why Phoenix is different**

- Robert Estice shared this [slide presentation](#).
- Phoenix uses Mastery assessment, students have to do an assignment and do everything they're expected to do and basically get 100% or revise it.
- Increased Teacher/Student Contact Time - Longer school day helps build positive relationships, 7:40 am - 4:30 pm. On Fridays school is out at 1:30, but the staff stays for staff development and meetings until 4:30 or 5.
- Critical ?

- Phoenix has 3 additional classes our other middle schools don't have - Connections, Global Cultures, Foundations.
- Discovery Days helps students explore interests outside of school - after each quarter students go out and do things they want to do (i.e, Charlie created a fake graveyard in his front yard for Halloween; Savina learned how to cook with her grandma; Katie did a sewing project.)
- We value and encourage student voice and ideas.
- Q&A Session: How do students get to attend Phoenix? In February of each year, the Phoenix staff spends 45 with every 6th grader in the district. Students fill out an application, then a lottery is done at the WEC in April; students have a few weeks to decide, there is a waiting list that can fill in if there are openings. This year the boy/girl ratio was almost equal.
- Phoenix holds two parent/family nights and two open houses, every staff member attends, students give tours to prospective students.
- In the Fall of 2021 Phoenix will include 6th grade.
- There is an even pull East v West: there are 44 students whose home school would be McCord students, 22 KMS and WWAY students.
- Busing is available, students join their neighborhood schools for sports and drama after school.
- There is homework, lots of students can get it done during the day while at school, harder for students in sports as they miss the final study hall.
- Staff feels lucky to be here as the students choose to be here and want to be here!
- **Clare Volz and Worthington Academy**
 - Worthington Academy is an alternative high school program offering flexible options to students from TWHS, WKHS and Linworth. It is a half day program with 4 full time teachers.
 - Academy can meet the needs of a large range of students.
 - Clare feels Worthington is the coolest place for alternative learning!
 - Academy is for the kid with a story, kids who have dropped out of high school and want to return to get a diploma, kids with severe health issues that miss a lot of school, kids with severe anxiety, national merit students who really want to work ahead, students who need to work to support their family, refugees, students on internships, students who are caregivers at home, students who just want to graduate early, students who are under-credited.
 - Student Anna McNabb spoke first, she said Academy saved her life, she has high anxiety, didn't like traditional high school and she graduated 3 months ago.
 - Cheyenne Fleurantin spoke second, she did online school half of 8th grade and TRECA, it didn't work for her and she needed a push. Freshman year came to the Academy, her mom passed away in March and her aunt helped her get in. Academy has helped her get everything she needs to graduate, loves the family and community feel.

- Michael Bontrager spoke third, he said high school has been crazy for him, his freshman year he passed just one class the entire year, sophomore year he missed about 4 months of school due to anxiety/depression, started at Academy his sophomore year, had a horrible year, but then junior year something changed, he was able to catch up and then some, he did 16 semester classes in one year! He said he wouldn't be where he is without Academy, it is the best thing that's ever happened to him!
- Milo Browne spoke last, his freshman year after his first season of marching band he was in a lot of pain all the time, everywhere, after a few months and missing a lot of school, he was diagnosed with fibromyalgia. He missed 60 days of school, saw a counselor at TWHS and learned about the Academy. He finished a class in the first 2 days at Academy and caught up completely in one year! He didn't want to return to TWHS, loves Academy and the family loves it here, it's the best way for him to do school!
- The schedule at Academy is one morning session and one afternoon session, students come for 3 hours a day. To graduate, you have to get it done with mastery based learning, students work hard while they are here. Academy offers counseling services and a blended learning environment, and everything is available online when students miss school. Academy is not an isolated/individual environment.
- Academy is moving towards career connections, they are looking at partnering with local businesses around the community for those students not college bound or entering the military. Currently Academy is partnering with Worthington Industries, 8 Academy students will be bussed there, taught how to join the workforce, get high school credit while being paid to work there. Everyone starts on factory floor and then can move on from there, and Worthington Industries will pay for students to attend school for classes that relate to their job.
- Q&A: , is there a capacity? There is a maximum of 50 students in the am and 50 in the pm, Academy doesn't have the space or staff for more students.
- What does the other half of the day look like for the students? Some work, some go to their home high school for electives, etc. Some just cannot physically do a full day of school.

Linworth Experiential Program with Teacher Director Chris Hasebrook

- Chris has been at Linworth for 32 years and he said he get lots of support! Linworth gets to try some really neat things that aren't happening in other schools in central Ohio or even in the country!
- He said he hears all the time, "What is that program that's been on 161 in a house for 47 years?!" Linworth is a small community of 160 kids trying to observe, build and do things in education that every high school is trying to build: Linworth is community, self advocacy and growth, taking responsibility, finding ways to serve.
- Day to day life at Linworth is much more personal. He is known as Chris, there are 160 students and 10 staff, they really get to know each other. Their mantra is to take care of

yourself, take care of this place, and take care of each other! There are no locks on lockers, there are piles of stuff all over the place, yet no one takes anything, messes with anything because it's a community and everyone looks out for each other. The students have a lot of expectations put on them, and they learn about engaging with each other.

- There is a weekly town meeting where students can propose ideas, share, bicker, shift responsibility back to the students.
- Currently, 7 students are teaching semester classes!
- Student Maddie Witherup spoke, she is teaching a dance class that goes for PE credit, she has been a dancer since she was 4 and wanted to teach. She went to Laura Zelch and Maddie designed classes over the summer and every other day she's teaching 2 classes.
- Linworth's name changed this year to Experiential program from Alternative program. During their 4 years students learn through experience. They have a cross section of students from across the district. They have graduates in Ivy League schools, the military, etc.
- Students do a 500 hour internship called Walkabout their 2nd semester of senior year; there are no seniors in the building. Linworth believes in the concept that learning happens not just inside the school walls, but through life and experiencing different things. Students keep a reflective journal, writing about what they are doing, experiencing and learning.
- Graduate Katie spent one of her two Walkabouts in Costa Rica, she knew just 3 words in Spanish, but said it just works out! She learned to be resourceful, was farming there, taking care of 300 chickens. Her 2nd Walkabout was working on the US/Mexico border in Arizona, a humanitarian project.
- Maddie Witherup spent her first Walkabout in Vietnam teaching English to Kindergarten students and working in a nursery in a hospital. Her 2nd Walkabout was working in a nonprofit for women who were a product of human trafficking.
- Walkabout doesn't happen anywhere in the country except Linworth!
- Guidance Counselor and Health/PE Teacher Laura Zelch said the students take all the core curriculum classes, they are officially a "program" of TWHS and WKHS, students get a diploma from their home school. Linworth offers everything needed for graduation, have busses to take kids to their home school for foreign language, AP classes, etc.
- Linworth is a CHOICE school, the morale is great among students and staff since students choose to be there!
- Linworth staff visits the district's 8th graders 2nd semester, answer questions, have about 100 students do half day visits in the spring to apply for the following year.
- Most students start as freshman, some come as sophomores.
- How are Walkabouts funded? Students work, parents help fund, Linworth has scholarships students can apply for, alumni fund scholarships as well.

Ben Rule will speak at another meeting since we ran short of time, not wanting to short change all the students and staff that spoke about these three amazing programs!

For those who wanted to stay, tours were given of Phoenix and Worthington Academy.

The next CLC meeting is State of the Schools on Wednesday, February 26, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. Our CLC will meet in the WKHS Library at 6:15 p.m. for a short meeting while enjoying pizza and salad prior to Dr. Bower's address.

Margie Toy and PTAC

- 4 years ago this PTA Council opportunity came to her at a CLC meeting, this is her last term, as the president position is term limited, looking for someone to step up as PTAC president. Gives you an opportunity to create change within the district. [Click here](#) for more information on this position.

Neil Gupta said how much we appreciate our board members for all that they do and their involvement! Board member Jennifer Best will continue with the CLC in the new year, Julie Keegan will be stepping away from the Board and the CLC.

