

**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MINUTES
February 2, 2024**

Board Members In Attendance: Janice Corrado, Robin McKeon, Keith Molinari, Jennifer White

Administrators in Attendance: Michael Fackelman, Kristin Fox, Grant Kolmer, Russ Lazovick, Nick Markarian, Tom Misiak, Stephanie Orr, Stephanie Smith, Kathy Stotler, John Terry

1. **Board Agenda items:** There are no voting items for our next Board of Education meeting.

2. **Discussion Items:**
 - a. **Health 10:** Dr Lazovick and Ms. Howarth came to answer questions that had arisen at a January BOE meeting as well as address any additional questions. At a previous curriculum committee, they presented a proposal to increase the current 3 weeks of Health 10 to a full marking period. Currently students have a full marking period of health in 9th grade (4th marking period) and then do not have a full marking period of health until 11th grade (third marking period). Sophomore students have Drivers Ed first marking period, then 3 weeks of content was added 3 years ago in order to deliver important content to bridge the lengthy gap in health instruction. At this time revisions were made to option 2 and option 2 offsite which has been quite successful. Health teachers have reported being rushed to get through a very robust curriculum in both 11th and 12th grade which does not allow them to go in depth to some topics. This proposal includes moving topics out of 11/12th grade health and adding them to Health 10. This would allow more in depth instruction at all grade levels and in particular would move topics related to drugs and alcohol to Health 10. It is important to note that students themselves have asked for additional health and have said it is both needed and important.

Some questions that arose:

1. Could we add any physical activities to the extra 6 weeks of health instruction? This is not possible as there is no additional building space. The gyms are already being utilized for Physical Education classes.

2. Could we let students choose whether they wanted to take health or physical education? No, Health is a required course which requires a specific number of minutes per week..
3. Are there opportunities for physical activity during the marking periods where Health takes place? Yes. The opportunity period (lunch) offers the ability for students to take advantage of a variety of activities. The fitness center is open and used during this period. In addition, the gym is open and students often play basketball. Students are also encouraged to go outside and can be found playing Spike Ball, walking on the track, playing football and just hanging out outside to get fresh air and options such as Yoga are also offered.
4. Could we add physical education electives? This could be a possibility in the future but this would require additional staff and curriculum writing. A physical education elective would not be weighted and therefore students may not be likely to request this type of course. Also, as students already have a chunk of time (Opportunity period) to be active, the need for an added Physical Education elective is not great. Ms Fox shared that it is possible to explore specialized Physical Education rather than an elective such as offering a menu of activities during class for the 2025-26 school year and will see if students might be interested. In the meantime, Dr. Lazovick will continue to push out communication about the Opportunity Period and what is available for students.
5. Could the extra Health be moved to marking period 3 so that Health and Physical Education alternate by marking periods? Yes health 10 can be moved to the 3rd marking period and in fact is most desirable there.
6. Assigning additional homework may lead to stress and impact students' mental health and well being. To be clear, this plan does not include assigning additional homework. All work will take place in class. Adding content is for the sole purpose of making access to needed information available to students.
7. Could off site option 2 be looked into as well to allow students participating in activities such as dance at studios such as Gotta dance be eligible? Dr Lazovick explained that when changes were made to

the Option 2 process/requirements including off site option 2, that this was accomplished by creating a very lengthy list of pre approved, vetted organizations and in fact as a result students can easily apply and be approved for off site option 2 and have been for the past few years.

After our discussion, the committee unanimously recommended moving forward with the proposal to add a full marking period of health and to have it be moved to the 3rd marking period.

- [Grief Instruction Bill](#): This mandate utilizes wording similar to other mandates and leaves it up to districts to determine where to include this instruction and will provide resources. Upon initial exploration, it does seem that grief is a topic in our curriculum and we may meet this requirement already. Coping Skills is a new 10th grade topic and this mandate certainly fits here.

B. Summer Financial Literacy Assessments: Mr. Fackelman reviewed the history of this summer course and the rationale for developing an inhouse 6 week course. The summer course is now equitable to the semester course, includes the same content and is a graded course. The summer course includes 2 assessments that moved to being offered online during Covid. This past summer there was a rise in issues with assessments related to academic integrity. The course will once again be offered this summer June 24th-August 1st. There will be no change in content and it will continue to be an asynchronous course with content pushed out every 2 days. However, the assessments will not be offered online. The course can be taken online but students need to know up front that they must be available to come to Ridge on July 11th and August 1 to take the assessments in person and there will not be exceptions made. This course is not available to rising 9th graders and in fact it is recommended to take as an upperclassmen. As with the school year there will be an add/drop period.

C. Extended Instructional Support 2024: Summer support has been offered the past 3 years due to Covid grant money the district received. This allowed students who were struggling the opportunity to receive extra help. There was flexibility as well for families to schedule the help in person and remotely based on a student's availability. This tutoring was not high intensity and was more about maintaining skill level than advancing. This will be the last summer that there is grant money to fund summer instructional support for targeted grades K-5.

D. AP Policies: It was requested at last month's curriculum meeting that Ms. Fox explore how other districts handle AP eligibility as some districts limit the number of AP exams students can take at various grade levels while others do not. A mixed bag was found and districts tend to do what they want. It was also determined that very few districts post their AP scores. Some districts restrict who can take AP

courses based on requiring a qualifying exam which skews decisions. We are seeing increased requests for self study and seniors are eligible to do so. We feel good with our decision to limit the number of AP courses available to sophomores based on these findings.

Next month we will be provided an update on dual enrollment courses. Lastly, we discussed the dates/ times for the remaining curriculum meetings which will be the first Friday of the month this year. Our next meeting will be March 1st.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer White