



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

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Curriculum Committee Agenda
September 13, 2023 9:00 - 11:00 am
BOE Conference Room

Board Members in Attendance: Robin McKeon, Keith Molinari, Csilla Csipak, Timothy Salmon

Administrators in Attendance: Dave Hunscher, Grant Kolmer, Thomas Misiak, John Terry, Kristin Fox, Michael Fackelman, Stephanie Orr, Allyson Read, Nick Markarian, Sean Siet, Lisa Vitale

1. Board Agenda Items (5 minutes)

a. Action items to be placed on the next board agenda

[AP Physics C](#) – The proposal related to this book was reported with the July 20, 2023 Curriculum Committee minutes. One member of the public came in and spoke with Mr. Misiak, but did not ask any questions. There were no questions or concerns from any Board members.

The Committee recommendations approval.

b. Items to be listed under “Report on Progress”:

Textbook Recommendation: [Happier: Learn the Secrets to Daily Joy and Lasting Fulfillment](#) (The Study of Well Being)

The course was approved last year after a small-scale pilot during Opportunity Period in which resources were discussed and student feedback was obtained. It is open to all students and there are no prerequisites. Three sections (~60 students) have signed up for the course this year. Staff (teacher, school social worker and Student Assistance Counselor) finished curriculum writing this summer with this book in mind. The proposed book is utilized in multiple collegiate courses related to happiness including courses at Yale, Penn and Harvard, but is appropriate for a wide range of learners. The focus of the book is prompting students to find happiness in work. If approved, the books would be ordered from The Bookworm in Bernardsville.

The book will be at the Board Office for public review.

2. Discussion Items

a. *Summer Curriculum Updates*

Summaries of curriculum changes are linked below, by department. If you have questions about any of these projects or changes, please send them in advance of Wednesday's meeting. Due to time constraints, we will review the first two content areas listed below in September and can cover the rest in subsequent meetings.

There were 102 summer curriculum projects this summer. The linked documents provide detailed information about each project. The notes below are related to discussion/questions from the Committee meeting about specific projects.

Implementation of the curriculum revisions will be voted on at the October 16, 2023 meeting. If there are any questions, it would be helpful to have those prior to the October 6, 2023 Curriculum Committee meeting so that Ms. Fox and the staff can address them and the responses reported out.

- [*Fox Updates](#) (including HPE, RHS, WAMS and district level projects)
 - [Standards Based Report Card Project](#)
 - “Approaches to Learning” scale was revised to capture frequency of behaviors related to learning (e.g., perseverance, participation, etc.) from the Satisfactory, S+ and Needs Improvement (NI) scale based upon feedback from the staff. Overall the feeling was more universal that a scale based on frequency was more appropriate and is more commonly used. If an Infrequently (I) indicator is given, there would be communication with parents. Standards based report grade (trying to separate what students know/understand for content-based indicators vs. behaviors related to learning (perseverance, social, participation, etc.) – looking back at one year of implementation (used last year for 5th grade)
 - *October In-Service for Staff* focused on understanding and applying the 1-4 scale on the academic portion of the report card and aligning the scoring across buildings for each grade level. 3 is grade level work, 4 is exceptional, and a 1 or 2 indicates below grade level and indicates areas in need of improvement.
 - *Parent Academy on December 7, 2023* done in conjunction with PTOs and PEC from all buildings will be open to all parents and focus on students learning concepts as opposed to getting A's.
 - *Math SBRC Updates* – based on the outcomes from the Oak Street Grade 1 Math Reboot. The Grade 1 Math Reboot was an intensive professional learning community where resources are specifically designated for work revolving around and tracking data over the course of the year. Supervisors, administrators and teachers meet monthly during the school day for a few hours to divide into data teams focused around specific learners we are tracking
 - Recent reboots have included:
 - 21-22 OSS grade 4 ELA - tracked weakest writers, designed specifically mini lessons, continued to assess and refine strategies. * yielded big jump on state test

scores , and more invested enthusiastic writers in the whole grade

- 22-23 OSS grade 1 Math - tracked student ability to decompose 10, found new materials and resources that focused on this need. Reworked math curriculum to match data. Yielded strong math sense and confidence in learners
- 23-24 - OSS grade 3 Sci/SS starts at the end of the month.
- Teachers determined that students understood mathematical concepts but could be confused by word problems. Staff worked on strategies to assist students in understanding the mathematical concepts being invoked (e.g., by reducing verbiage, reading questions aloud and emphasizing certain words, etc.) and they streamlined the assessments.
- *Science SBRC Updates* – there were traditionally four categories on the report card: Engineering/Design, Earth Science, Life Science, and Physical Science. Engineering/Design was removed as a separate category, because it is covered in the other 3 areas, which simplifies the report card indicators. Also, instruction on each category is synchronized to the same trimester across buildings (e.g., each elementary school is learning Earth Science in the first trimester).
- *Curriculum Mandate project* - relates to work on implementation of state curricular mandates including Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Amistad; and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, as well as the likely forth-coming Information Literacy standards.
- *Health Curriculum Year 2 Revision Project*
 - Ms. Fox reviewed the letters sent to parents for each of the grades. All commonly used materials are linked and available for student and parent access. If a teacher were to use additional materials, those materials would be provided to parents in advance of the associated lessons. One Board member asked how an additional material would be selected by staff. Ms. Fox explained that it would be selected and reviewed pursuant to the [district resource use criteria](#)
 - [Grade 1 Health Curriculum Updates 2023-2024](#). Letters have already been sent to parents in all grades. K-5 Teachers will include notice of health unit topics weekly or monthly prior to each unit. Grades 6-12 teachers will send the letter to parents again at the beginning of the marking period. In all cases, if the Unit/Lesson relates to Family Life and Sexual Education, there will be notice to parents at least one week in advance in all grades.
 - Ms. Fox explained that changes were made to the curriculum K-12 based on staff feedback from last year. Changes are identified in the linked documents.

- One Board member asked which assignment a student will receive if he/she is opted out. Ms. Fox explained that alternative lessons were developed last year for all grade levels. If a student is opted out of the entire course, he/she will be given an independent research project (i.e., identifying a health-related topic with parental approval and producing output that will be evaluated).
- RHS Wellness and WAMS Discipline – these projects related to developing modules for discipline, restorative practices and counseling. One Board member suggested that discipline/restorative practices could be a good topic for a parent academy.
 - [*Social Studies and QUEST](#)
 - [English Language Arts](#)
 - [Mathematics](#)
 - [Science and Tech Ed](#)
 - [Special Education](#)
 - [World Languages](#)
 - [Visual and Performing Arts](#)
- b. Program Evaluations
 - [Mathematics - Executive Summary](#) (Pushed to October)

3. FTGOTO

One Board member asked about the potential for reinstating the Washington, D.C. trip at WAMS. There was a discussion related to cost, staff chaperones and student and parental desire for the trip to be resumed. The administration will investigate these issues and provide responses.

Respectfully submitted,
Timothy Salmon

- **Opt Out:** *I like the changes in the form and I feel it captures what we are trying to accomplish.*
- **Communication:** *The letter I received indicates an email from the teacher at the beginning of the marking period. The letter also says topics will be posted a week prior to the lesson including resources. Is a communication from the teacher also going out a week prior to remind parents the resources are posted?*
- **Resources:** *The resources linked thru the initial email had two resources that were listed, both websites. On Wed, can you share an example of what other grades' parents received and does it include links to all the resources to be used (presentations, handouts, videos websites, etc.). My understanding was that resources to be used were to be available at the beginning of the year.*