

CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Curriculum Committee Minutes
November 14, 2018

Committee Members Present

Mrs. Sharon Collopy, Chairperson
Mrs. Beth Darcy
Mrs. Jodi Schwartz

Dr. John Kopicki, Superintendent
Dr. Nadine Garvin, Asst. Superintendent
Dr. Abram Lucabaugh, Asst. Superintendent

Committee Members Absent

Mr. Dennis Weldon

Others in Attendance

Mrs. Karen Smith, Board Member

Jason Jaffe, Director of Technology & Innovation

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

REVIEW OF MEETING NOTES

The October 10, 2018 Curriculum Committee Meeting minutes were reviewed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Gracey addressed the Committee regarding later start times for secondary students. She proposed interim solutions such as an optional fifth block enabling a 9 a.m. start time, a district-approved online course, dual enrollment where students receive high school credit for community college courses, an open-door policy at the nurse's office where students could rest/nap instead of going to lunch, and a policy change regarding tardiness. She provided handouts to the Committee on the subject, including biological information about the sleep patterns of teenagers. Discussion was held regarding the difficulties of adopting a later start due to the size of CB and the complexity of the transportation schedule. Mrs. Darcy noted that the subject is on the agenda for the Finance Committee meeting next week, and the plan is to begin the research process for how the district might be able to adopt a later secondary start time. She expressed support of the idea, commenting that student's health and well-being are at the forefront of the Board's agenda. She acknowledged the complexity of the process, and the Board's responsibility to consider all aspects of what that change would bring. Members of the public stressed the importance of the issue and suggested finding interim solutions for students while the research is being done. Mrs. Schwartz noted the district is already exploring the option of dual enrollment. Mrs. Collopy assured attendees that the Board is making every effort to fully address the situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL:

Approval for the revision of three courses of study: Introduction to 3D Modeling & Animation; Photography 1; Photography 2: Mrs. Deb Thomas, K-12 Art Coordinator, Mr. Stu Kesilman (South Art Teacher) and Ms. Beth Janney Horan (South Art Teacher) presented a proposal for the revision of three courses of study.

Revisions to the Introduction to 3D Modeling and Animation curriculum are necessary so the course will be more relevant to current industry standards. Since the course inception in 2002-2003, the software utilized is outdated and no longer supported by the company. The proposed replacement software – Autodesk entertainment suite – is a professional and robust software package that would allow students to have experience using industry standard programs commonly used for movies, television, gaming and product design fields. Recent district technology initiatives are now strong enough to support the new, more robust program which is free with the district's educational license.

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Mrs. Darcy asked if students would be able to access the new software from home, Mrs. Thomas stated that basic laptops are not strong enough to support the program. The new curriculum would encourage further creative thinking, problem solving, innovation and more exploration through advanced software.

Revisions to the Photography 1 & 2 curriculums will incorporate the relevance, accessibility, and practicality of digital photography while connecting to the origins of fine art darkroom photography. Each unit would have a digital component. Students will use their phones to express themselves creatively, while using editing programs and apps to enhance images. Darkroom work will be enriched with similar digital exercises via Photoshop and/or digital shooting. Units of study for both Photography 1 & 2 were reviewed, and examples of student works were shown. Students are required to provide a standard camera for the course. Mrs. Schwartz inquired about support for students that were unable to afford the camera, Mrs. Thomas noted that each school has a policy for helping students in need. Students can use their phones for the digital portion of the class. Mrs. Darcy asked if the Art Department could use donated 35mm cameras from the public, and would it help to advertise the need. Mrs. Thomas indicated that would be a wonderful support for the program.

The Committee agrees to move the proposed revisions to the full board for approval.

Dr. Kopicki expressed his appreciation to Mrs. Thomas for her efforts responding to his request for 75 pieces of student art to be featured at the Bucks County Art Show. He attended the show last week, and he noted the talent of the CB students was inspiring. He also remarked that Chris Villante (East Music Teacher) brought the East choir to perform, and the students were spectacular. Dr. Kopicki expressed his pride in CB students, and his gratitude to the teachers that provide such outstanding instruction.

Approval for the adoption of a new Integrated Technology course: Technology and Application Development (9th Grade Elective): Mr. Jonathan Boyle, Mr. Joseph Piselli, Mr. Brian Merrill and Mrs.

Lindsay Smith presented a proposal for adoption of a new Integrated Technology course. As part of the new middle school schedule implemented last year, the Integrated Technology course was created and delivered to 7th and 8th grades, as well as an elective for 9th grade students. The proposed course will be the continuum of Integrated I and Integrated II courses, and will be the final stage of the new curriculum. The new course will be a 9th grade elective and will introduce students to relevant and modern technologies of App development, creation of AR/VR products, as well as a continuation of Digital Marketing concepts. Students will receive instruction to meet technology proficiencies, independently apply skills, and illustrate understanding through project-based application. Units of study were detailed, and it was noted that this is the first CB course utilizing a virtual environment as part of the curriculum. The district's association with Microsoft provides training opportunities with the Microsoft educator community that are free of charge. A video of the educational opportunity utilizing mixed reality was presented. The purchase of 5 Acer headsets per middle school is proposed. Dr. Kopicki noted that funding was available in the Curriculum budget for the approximately \$12,500 purchase, and would need to come before the full board for approval. Students will have the opportunity to work with the community to create projects relevant to assessed needs.

Dr. Kopicki stated it was essential to look at the business indicators in the community and assure that the CB curriculum matches those needs. Developing internships in the community, and utilizing community partners to offset costs, are an important consideration. He noted that during his recent community meetings the public expressed how appreciative they were of the investment the board has made in technology. He encouraged the presentation of new and innovative methods of teaching.

Mrs. Collopy expressed concern that there would be an additional burden placed on core classroom teachers for technology instruction. Mrs. Smith detailed the timeline regarding a student's exposure to different levels of technology. That timeline would help ensure that a core classroom teacher would be able to rely on student proficiency at their instruction level.

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The Committee agrees to move the proposed course and purchase to the full board for approval.

UPDATE/INFORMATION:

Overview and Progress Report: CBSD AP Chemistry Partnership with the Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center: Mr. Mark Hayden (West AP Chemistry Teacher) and Mrs. Laura E'Nama, K-12 Science Supervisor presented a progress report on the partnership program with the Biotechnology Center. The program began this year and is comprised of 15 secondary students (5 from each high school) who take AP Chemistry at the Biotechnology Center. The class at the Center provides an opportunity for the students to work with world-renowned scientists in the field. Logistics of the program were reviewed. Students assist their mentors with research projects, and the mentors assist students with their own research project. The application process for participation in the program was reviewed. Mr. Hayden noted the access to state of the art equipment was an exceptional opportunity for the students. Photos of the classroom/lab were shown. The mentorship matching process was detailed. Students will participate in district science fairs and competitions in the spring. Mrs. Collopy expressed her full support for the class, and noted the importance of identifying expenses accurately so the Board has a full understanding of the cost. Items not associated with the class should be separately identified when the Board is asked to approve expenses.

The Committee encouraged Mr. Hayden to come back in the spring and provide another update on the class.

CB West ELD Transition Course: Dr. Lucabaugh provided details on the ELD program housed at CB West. The program began the year with 30 students from diverse backgrounds, some that have had no formalized education for five or six years. Many students are over 18. There has been an increase in enrollment, an additional six students have entered the program since the beginning of the year. The district is facing the challenge of finding an appropriate pathway for those students to receive credit. Ms. Karine Simpson (West ELD Teacher) noted that a primary difficulty is the fact that students have only completed up to a sixth or eighth grade education, and many have not been in a formalized education setting for several years. Students that are 18 or almost 18 will also age out of the program before receiving enough credit to graduate. Many students have no computer experience. Even the ability to access district communications poses difficulty to some ELD students - for example, students would be taught how to receive district weather alerts. The Transition Course would be given in a nine-week period, and teach ELD students how to utilize all resources available to them. Mrs. Collopy noted the proposed course would be started immediately because the marking period has begun. Because the course is being utilized as a support and an extension of Advisory, and there is no change in curriculum, there is no need for Committee action or Board approval.

Proposal for the High School Final Exam Calendar: Dr. Lucabaugh provided details on the new high school final exam calendar. The proposed calendar allows students to attend school and focus on their exams, rather than complete a full day of regular classes with an exam piece included within the day. The calendar also allows teacher time to grade exams and prepare for the upcoming semester, as well as having the opportunity for professional development. It is also proposed that teachers take the time to review exam grades with the students, rather than students receiving a grade without feedback. Mrs. Collopy suggested the calendar show the days as "final days" rather than "half days". Dr. Kopicki confirmed that this finals schedule would be implemented for the full school year. Mrs. Collopy expressed her full support for this change. The calendar will be made public immediately.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 p.m.