

CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes September 13, 2017

Committee Members Present

Mrs. Sharon Collopy, Chairperson
Mr. Dennis Weldon

Mr. John Kopicki, Superintendent
Dr. Scott Davidheiser, Assistant Superintendent

Committee Members Not Present

Mr. John Gamble

Dr. Jerel Wohl

Others in Attendance

Mr. Glenn Schloeffel, Board Member
Mrs. Karen Smith, Board Member

Mr. Jason Jaffe, Director of Innovation & Technology
Mr. Ed Tate, Director of Communications

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mrs. Collopy

REVIEW OF MEETING NOTES

The August 9, 2017 Curriculum Committee Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved without changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/UPDATES

Recommendation for Approval: Dr. Davidheiser introduced Ms. Stacy Gray, World Language Coordinator. Ms. Gray presented a proposal for the addition of a French III Honors class.

The Language Department is hoping that the addition of a French III Honors class would encourage more students to continue through to the AP French class. The current core sequence includes French I and French II, offered in middle school. Students would then move to French III (academic) in high school. French IV and French IV Honors classes are currently offered. The prerequisite for AP French is French IV honors, however there is a significant drop off in enrollment after French III (academic). Ms. Gray noted that parents of students in the French curriculum often question the lack of a French III Honors class. French students in tenth grade currently cannot take a weighted honors course in French, the honors class would give them that opportunity. The addition of a French III Honors class would offer a more comprehensive program, along the lines of the core sequence offered in Spanish classes. The current Spanish and French curriculum offerings are not equitable, the addition of the French III Honors class would address that situation.

The addition of the honors class would also lighten the French IV curriculum. The French IV Honors class currently uses the more difficult concepts from a French III textbook. By adding a French III Honors class, the French IV Honors curriculum would have more time to focus on harder concepts in preparation for the AP class. There would still be sufficient material in the French III textbook to create a French III Honors curriculum.

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Mrs. Collopy noted that there is a Spanish V class offered, and there is no French V. Ms. Gray commented that there is a French V curriculum, however enrollment numbers have not supported offering that class for some time. Mrs. Collopy asked if a student could take French V as independent study. Ms. Gray noted that it would be available, however a student would not receive credit for the class. Dr. Davidheiser commented if the addition of a French III Honors class were approved, there may need in the future to re-evaluate the curriculum. Students completing French IV could have the option of choosing French V or AP French. If there were a need to offer French V, he felt the Board would want to bring the class in as an approved course, not an independent study.

Ms. Gray noted that fifty-eight students completed AP French in the 2016-2017 school year, fifty-six of them completed the full CB curriculum from French I. The enrollment numbers in French are much lower than Spanish, and the hope is that the addition of French III Honors will help increase enrollment.

A French III Honors class would offer more detailed grammar than the French III academic class, allowing for in-depth writing that the current French III class is unable to cover. The honors class would also offer more advanced reading selections and listening activities, which will help prepare for AP French.

Eligibility for the French III honors course would be based on academic work ethic and specific grade point averages, motivation and classroom behavior – modeled on the criteria for Spanish III Honors class. Teacher and student would meet to ensure that the class would be an appropriate choice for the student. Honors courses are rigorous, and the student needs to be prepared that they may not receive the high grades they are accustomed to.

Ms. Gray stated that purchase of more of the current French III books, which would be utilized for the honors class, would cost approximately \$14,000.00. Consumable workbooks would also be purchased, making the total cost for materials for the first year of implementation about \$17,000.00. Some of the cost for the workbooks would be reimbursed, since students who want to write in them would need to buy them. Careful scheduling avoiding overlap of Honors III and French IV classes would also reduce the number of textbooks needed. No additional staffing would be required.

There are currently 154 students moving to French III, which would separate into academic and honors classes. Dr. Davidheiser noted that the expectation is there would be one section of Honors III per each high school. The Honors III class would help with the overloaded French IV classes. The option of a French III Honors class would also encourage more students to move through the curriculum, as the current French III academic class does not sufficiently prepare students for the rigors of a French IV Honors class.

The Language Department is suggesting that the French III Honors class be a pilot program for two years. The curriculum would utilize the 2007 textbook for the pilot program. If the program is successful, a more up-to-date textbook could be purchased at that time. Dr. Davidheiser asked if the 2007 textbook would be sufficient for the coursework. Ms. Gray commented that the more up-to-date textbook has the same material, just more “bells and whistles” with additional online components and phone apps, etc.

Mrs. Collopy inquired if the Honors III class could be offered as an A/B day class, allowing more music students to participate. Ms. Gray noted that upper level French students discontinue classes because

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they want to fit music classes in their schedule. Those students could continue their French instruction if the course were offered on an A/B schedule. Ms. Gray also commented that linguistically, it would be beneficial to see students every other day for 10 months rather than one semester.

Ms. Gray noted that if the French III Honors class received Board approval, it was ready to be included in course offerings for January 2018. That would allow students to begin classes in the Fall of 2018. Mr. Schloeffel asked if the course could be offered on an A/B schedule. Dr. Davidheiser suggested it be semester based at first, and participation reviewed after the first year.

The Committee recommends the addition of a French III Honors course be moved to the full Board for approval.

UPDATE/INFORMATION

Study Abroad Program: Ms. Gray presented to the Committee an overview of the study abroad program and the most recent trip to Spain.

In 2014, CB students travelled to Spain. Students travelled to France in 2016, and then again to Spain this past summer. The same itinerary and locations are visited each time. There will be a proposal for the 2018 trip to France submitted to the Board soon. Ms. Gray noted that travel is dependent on world conditions and travel alerts. Should travel warnings prevent the program from going to the planned destination, an alternative site would be chosen which would offer a similar experience. For example, if conditions prevented a trip to France, the travel company would transfer the destination to another French speaking country. The destination transfer would prevent cancellation of the trip and the loss of deposit monies. The scheduled trip includes instruction based on curriculum, and transfer of destination would not provide the same opportunity.

Study Abroad is a course with an application process. Two teacher recommendations are required, one from a Spanish teacher one from a core curriculum teacher. An essay detailing the student's reasons for wanting to take the course must be written in Spanish. A parent approval form is required. Preference for acceptance in the course goes to rising seniors, then rising juniors. Four mandatory pre-travel sessions are required. There is a post-trip project requirement for the course, which must be presented once school resumes in the fall.

Ms. Gray presented a sample itinerary for the study abroad trips, including instruction topics pertinent to travel spots. Reflections of participants were reviewed, including comments from Christina Lang (principal at Unami), Gina Caravella (Spanish teacher), and several students. A video including photos from the recent trip to Spain was shown.

Technology Scope and Sequence: Mr. Jaffe introduced Mrs. Lindsay Smith, who presented the Committee with an update on how the Innovation & Technology Department is supporting the current K-6 curriculum. A Technology Scope and Sequence Committee was previously formed by Mr. Jaffe. Mrs. Smith has taken his role working with K-6 teachers during meetings that began last summer. The Scope and Sequence Committee reviewed the checklist of types of technology instruction needed at the elementary level. The Committee wanted to move away from a checklist format, using a more collaborative effort to ensure elementary students are technologically ready to move to a middle school

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setting. A “Tech Toolkit” was developed as a planning guide, detailing skills sixth grade students need to have before leaving elementary school. The toolkit format was broken down into grade levels to make instruction more manageable for teachers, tying skills to curriculum at each level. The Committee reviewed the seven ISTE standards for 21st century technology skills for students K-12. CB instruction had previously only met the first standard of “empowering students to use a computer”. The Committee addressed what standards would be needed to cover remaining ISTE standards and ensure the effective use of educational technology. Mrs. Smith provided information on how each grade level group was now meeting ISTE standards using current curriculum.

District Technology Committee: Mr. Jaffe presented information on the District Technology Committee, formed to assist teachers who need additional help with technology instruction requirements. He also noted that on May 10 there will be a student technology showcase at CB South. The Committee will have students present various technology techniques to parents attending the showcase.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Next Meeting: October 11, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.