

CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Curriculum Committee Meeting
October 11, 2017

Committee Members Present

Mrs. Sharon Collopy, Chairperson
Mr. John Gamble
Mr. Dennis Weldon

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

Committee Members Not Present

Dr. Jerel Wohl

Others in Attendance

Mrs. Karen Smith

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 September 13, 2017 Curriculum Committee Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved without changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/UPDATES:

Update/Information:

CB Social Studies teacher Ms. Jessica Weaver presented an overview of Canvas (Learning Management System). She showcased how teachers and students utilize the program in a variety of ways. Students can access Canvas and view their daily agenda for class. They are able access Power Points and handouts referenced and provided by the teacher for the daily lesson.

Ms. Weaver noted that Canvas is an excellent tool for students that struggle with organization, any materials needed for class are accessible via Canvas. Notes taken during class are available for students 24/7, providing them study material whenever needed. Students at all levels, whether they are struggling or honor students, are strongly supported by the Canvas system. Canvas allows the student access to all class materials for review and study at any time. Ms. Weaver presented a sample of her daily agenda, which students view immediately upon entering class. Daily objectives are listed, providing students with the plan for the day. Students are also able to leave questions for the teacher, enabling the teacher to be prepared with answers for the next class. Homework is also listed, and students can access that information from home as well.

Canvas also provides an excellent platform for co-teaching. Ms. Weaver gave the example of having the librarian include links to instruction for research skills. Students have access to learning tools for the research skills needed to complete the objectives for Ms. Weaver's class. Teachers can load quizzes on Canvas for students to complete. Teachers are then able to view a student's progress, checking where they may be struggling and need reinforcement. Grades can also be uploaded to Infinite Campus from Canvas.

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Ms. Weaver noted that the link from OneNote to Canvas is not seamless, however it can be done and provides a collaborative space for students to work in groups. Ms. Weaver feels that digitally sharing their work is a 21st century skill that will be needed in whatever future endeavor the students face.

Canvas also provides a virtual “share” ground where information created for one class can be accessible to anyone using Canvas in another class across the district. Mrs. Collopy noted that it sounded similar to “Drop Box”. Mr. Gamble asked if the share section was searchable, Ms. Weaver responded that it was.

Ms. Weaver commented that she found the Canvas “hotline” an invaluable resource. The hotline is available 24/7, and provides answers and tutorials for any type of issue. She did note that the tie between OneNote and Canvas is not an easy one, and anticipated that teachers would require more training on how best to utilize the programs together.

Mr. Gamble commented that he had heard from some teachers that the difficulty utilizing OneNote with Canvas was a big concern. He also noted that Canvas provides a plethora of apps that the district does not currently use, and wondered when those might become available. Embedding You Tube as a button in Canvas is also possible, providing access to You Tube videos without accessing the You Tube site. Mr. Gamble noted that high school students have access to You Tube, and wondered if ninth graders would be allowed the same access. Ms. Weaver stated that there is a work around for the One Note issue, she creates a One Note page that is then linked to a page in Canvas. Mrs. Weaver also downloads You Tube videos to “KeepVid”, then links that to her lessons in Canvas. That process allows her to have the video as a permanent file, rather than just a link to You Tube.

Dr. Davidheiser noted that since the district is currently using the six-month free trial version of Canvas, not all apps available with the product are activated. If the district were to subscribe to Canvas, those apps would be available. Mr. Gamble noted that he had seen what the apps provide, and was amazed at the possibilities for use.

Mrs. Smith asked if Canvas was going to replace teacher websites. Dr. Davidheiser noted that the websites would still be available with pertinent information. Mrs. Smith commented that updating both sites could be cumbersome. Ms. Weaver remarked that she still puts her homework on her teacher website, more so for parents to access. Her students primarily access Canvas. Dr. Davidheiser spoke to the goal of having all information available with a single sign on, rather than going to individual teacher websites to access homework, assignments, etc.

Mrs. Collopy inquired about the current cost of Blackboard. Dr. Davidheiser noted that Mr. Jaffe reported that 100 users for Blackboard (the district currently has 80 users) would equal the cost of using Canvas for approximately 5,000 users across the district. Mr. Kopicki commented that it was his understanding that the Canvas program was about \$35,000 to purchase for one year, which was a significant savings over Blackboard. Mr. Weldon inquired about the length of contract required for Canvas, Dr. Davidheiser noted that it was a one-year contract for 5,000 users (licenses) at a cost of \$7 per user. Licenses would cover all five thousand users, whether students or teachers. The initial five thousand users would be all CB teachers, in addition to the 150 teachers and their students that participated in the initial pilot program. Mr. Gamble believes there is some flexibility in pricing based on the number of apps included. Mr. Weldon noted that if the program was not successful after a year, the district would not need to renew the contract. Mrs. Collopy asked for confirmation that there would be a year-end review of the program presented to the Committee, Dr. Davidheiser assured her there would

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be one presented which would include the cost going forward if it was determined the program was successful.

Dr. Davidheiser also noted that there would be an integration between Canvas and Infinite Campus, allowing for a seamless transfer of grades between the two programs. That integration is still being formulated by Canvas, there is no date yet when that integration will be operationalized. Mr. Gamble inquired if there were a teacher training planned. He was hesitant to move forward without a training plan, he believes the program would not be utilized effectively if teachers were not provided with the appropriate support. Dr. Davidheiser commented that there would not be a large-scale training done, but there will be support in every building provided by the tech committee and the teachers that have participated in the pilot program. Ms. Weaver also noted that there are webinars available for training, aside from the excellent tech support she spoke about earlier. Mr. Kopicki assured the Committee that the appropriate professional development would be provided for the teachers regarding training for Canvas.

Mrs. Collopy asked if the purchase was in the Innovation and Technology Department budget, Dr. Davidheiser assured her it was. The Committee recommends consideration to enter a one-year contract for the Canvas program be moved to full board.

Overview of ALICE Training:

Dr. Bolton provided the Committee with an update on the ALICE training. He thanked the Committee for their commitment to building improvements such as cameras and secure entryways. Those improvements have provided a safer physical environment for students and faculty.

Dr. Bolton highlighted a list of building drills done annually, the list included the off-site evacuation drill which is done every other year per state requirements. He noted that at least one drill happens per month. There is a CERT (critical and emergency response team) team in every building that plans the drills. For example, one drill may include what to do if a teacher were to have a heart attack.

Dr. Bolton focused on the “intruder on campus” drill. ALICE is replacing what was previously known as “intruder on campus”, the district will continue to call the drill “intruder on campus” but the protocols for the drill will change to the ALICE protocols. He noted that in CB the term “lockdown” is used when there is a concern generating from outside the building – for example, a criminal on the loose whose whereabouts are unknown. A “lockdown” means the building is secured, no movement is allowed in and out of the building. Within the building, there is still supervised movement. An “intruder on campus” indicates that there is danger within the building, usually associated with someone with a weapon. An “intruder on campus” alert could also be for those instances where there is suspicious activity from someone entering the building.

ALICE training was chosen for this type of drill because law enforcement “best practices” have changed within the last several years. Protocol used to be that in the case of an intruder on campus, police would secure the perimeter of the building and wait for a SWAT team. The police would not enter the building until a full SWAT team was present. Protocol has changed – police now immediately enter the building to neutralize the concern.

ALICE was created to address the change in police protocol. ALICE creators are a husband and wife team, he was a police officer and she was an elementary principal. After Sandy Hook they had serious

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concerns about safety in elementary schools, and developed a plan using recommendations from multiple federal agencies. Many local law enforcement agencies have adopted the ALICE training.

ALICE training provides “best practice” that can be utilized anywhere, not only within a school building. ALICE stands for “Alert” “Lockdown” “Inform” “Counter” and “Evacuate”. The acronym is not meant to be a sequential process. While “Alert” is typically the initial step, the other four steps are fluid depending on the situation. That fluidity affords the adults in the situation the ability to make common sense decisions based on the information they have. The previous “intruder on campus” protocol was rigid and did not allow for adaptations depending on circumstance. Mrs. Smith commented that with the ALICE protocol, if an intruder was on one side of a building the other side could be evacuated – a situation that was not addressed in the previous protocol.

“Alert” means providing whatever factual information is available, i.e. “there is an intruder on campus near the gym”. That allows the adults to choose options based on the information provided.

“Lockdown” is one of the options. The door would be secured, possibly using a barricade. This option tries to prohibit entry, as well as slow down the intruder’s progress through the campus. Because the event generally ends when police arrive on campus, slowing the progress of the intruder can be key.

“Inform” is what happens during the event. Students will be taught about dialing 911 and providing real information. For example, if an intruder were sighted in one area of the building but is now heard in another, indicating that he is moving, that would be important information for the police to know. Staff will be trained within the next few months on accessing the PA system through cell phones. All schools currently have this capability.

“Counter” is the last resort. Training on this option is age appropriate. Students are trained on what to do if the danger is right in front of you and you have nowhere to go. Options could include distraction (throwing things, screaming or running around) or rushing the individual to minimize the damage that could happen. Training at every age level begins with the instruction that the students listen to the adult, who will be making the decisions during the event.

“Evacuate” is addressed by drills presented previously.

All administrators, as well as 6-12 teachers from every building, were given ALICE training beginning in February and finishing in July. Most of the teachers trained are from CERT teams. In August, all teachers received the intensive online training. In fall faculty meetings, teachers will be run through some scenarios. The intention is to have all building level staff participate in the online training by December. There will be a parent meeting on November 13, it will be an evening presentation on the ALICE training. In December or January there will be assemblies where the principals will introduce the program in an age appropriate platform to students. The students will then return to a classroom and talk about the training in a small group format. There will be an “intruder on campus” drill conducted in February.

Mr. Gamble expressed concern that detailing district protocol at a parent meeting may “show our hand” to a potential intruder. Dr. Bolton noted that having discussion with students about such a serious matter would necessarily involve parental disclosure.

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Mrs. Smith asked if the board members would be able to take the training. Dr. Bolton noted that the online training could be made available for them, and arrangements could be made for board members to view one of the run through scenarios. Becoming familiar with the program would help board members with any questions they may be asked by the public.

Overview of the K-12 Art Curriculum:

Ms. Deborah Thomas, District Art Coordinator, Ms. Allison Levin (secondary) and Ms. Allison Theis (elementary), CB Art teachers, presented an overview of the K-12 Art Curriculum.

Ms. Thomas began by presenting the basics of each curriculum. Each curriculum is comprised of DBAE – Discipline Based Art Education. Production, History, Aesthetics and Criticism is at the core of each grade level curriculum. Production involves the “making” of art, History is the “who, what, when and how” of art, Aesthetics explores “what is beautiful”, Criticism speaks to whether a piece of art is “good”.

Ms. Thomas noted that student engagement is an important factor in the art curriculum. There is a diverse population of skills within the art program, teachers serve as a mentor for what may appear to be an unorganized class. In reality it is organized “chaos”, with an agenda and structured closure at the end of each class. Teachers present a topic to the class. Students come up with an idea, explore, develop, refine and design their piece, then have a final evaluation. The generation of an idea in the creative process teaches students life-long skills in product development and collaborative teamwork.

Ms. Theis discussed curriculum at the elementary level. Teachers approach elementary art students at an emotional level in the primary grades. Elementary students tend to want to stick with one idea, teachers encourage brainstorming and communication with peers to help students be open to exploring more than one idea to complete a project. Color wheel, color theory, and two and three-dimensional shapes are some topics covered at the Grade 1-3 level.

In Grades 4-6, students discuss time periods, artists, and comparisons between art periods and genres. Emotion is also a key component at this grade level, students discuss how art affects them personally and how it may affect what they produce as artists. Self-reflection, sketching and planning are all components of creating an art piece. Color schemes and perspective are topics covered at these grade levels.

Ms. Thomas discussed the art program at the middle school level. She noted that often when students reach seventh grade they become aware that they are “not good at art”. Teachers encourage students to believe that if they are creating art, they are artists. Focus is placed on the historical period of the late 1800’s through the early 1920’s. All seventh graders explore color theory, giving them the basic knowledge of color mixing. Eight graders explore the later modern art era, some contemporary artists are also introduced. Students begin to develop their opinion of art beyond the simple “I just don’t like it”. They are encouraged to explore and express specific reasons they do or don’t like an art piece.

Ninth grade art students can pick electives, choosing between three-dimensional design, photography (offered at Lenape), drawing and painting, and ceramics.

Ms. Levin discussed the secondary art curriculum. She noted how proud all the teachers in the art program are of their students, not only for what they accomplish while in Central Bucks but also for what they are doing beyond high school.

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The high school art program is very comprehensive, with many different areas of study including Fine Arts, Ceramics and Photography. High school students integrate the art curriculum with other disciplines – writing and researching are key components of each study area.

There is a chapter of the National Art Honor Society in each high school, accredited by the NAEA (National Art Education Association). Students work in the community painting murals, volunteering at Art Fest and Pumpkin Fest, and in many other endeavors. Community outreach helps students develop skills that can be utilized in high school and beyond.

Recommendation for Approval:

Ms. Deborah Thomas presented a proposal for an AP Studio Art course. Central Bucks is fortunate to be a community rich in arts in culture, however it is one of the few districts in the area that does not offer an AP art course. The Art Department feels an AP course in Studio Art would be embraced by the current CB art students. The AP course would offer instructional goals beyond the current curriculum, including Artistic Intention, Personal Voice and Expressive Qualities. The course would be for the highly driven student whose passion is art. Students will develop a portfolio of work.

The current curriculum includes Art I, II, III and IV. Art I and Art II would be the prerequisite courses for AP Studio Art. Students pursuing the AP track would complete Art I & II, AP Studio Art, then Art IV where they will complete the portfolio requirement from AP Studio Art.

AP Studio Art would be a 90-minute block class, which would mean no change in the teaching schedule. It would be an 18-week course for Juniors and Seniors. The course is student-centered where they are self-directed in pursuing their style, interests and concepts. Students will develop critical and creative thinking skills through innovation. The addition of AP Studio Art will better prepare CB Art students for college and life-long learning.

The Committee recommends the addition of an AP Studio Art course be moved to the full Board for approval.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Next Meeting: November 8, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.