

CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Board Curriculum Committee
February 8, 2017
Board Room – 16 Welden Drive
7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Sharon Collopy, Chair
John Gamble, Member
Dennis Weldon, Member

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS AND ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT

Beth Darcy	Dr. Davidheiser	Dr. Walloff
Meg Evans	Dr. Bolton	Mr. Richard Kratz
Glen Schloeffel	Mr. Ed Tate	Mrs. Laura E’Nama
Mr. John Kopicki		

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Jerel Wohl

PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The meeting minutes from January 11, 2017 meeting were reviewed and approved without changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at the meeting.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Textbook Recommendation—Biology—Laura E’Nama, K-12 Science Supervisor, presented a new textbook for 10th grade academic and honors Biology. Mrs. E’Nama explained that this is an updated version of the current book that is being used now. One of the main reasons that this textbook is being proposed is that it offered an online option for resources. The current book’s online resources are no longer supported by the publisher.

Mrs. Collopy asked if all biology teachers have evaluated the book. Mrs. E’Nama explained that biology teachers did review this book and other books as well but the teachers felt that this was book was the best option.

Mr. Gamble asked if we are purchasing enough books so that we do not need to share among the different high schools. Mrs. E’Nama explained that we ordering enough for a semester’s worth of students and that this is a required course so the numbers are accurate.

Mrs. Collopy asked if we are we purchasing a license for each student. Mrs. E’Nama explained that a license is required for each student and that would be purchasing a license for each student.

Mr. Weldon asked what is the life expectancy of the books? Mrs. E’Nama explained that the current books physical condition is good. One of the main reasons for replacing the book is to have the online component. The old book is no longer supported with online resources.

Mr. Weldon asked about the 6-year license. Mrs. E’Nama explained that the publisher is only willing to committed to a 6-year commitment. Mr. Welden has asked Mrs. E’Nama to look into the option of extending the 6-year licenses.

There was a long discussion about concerns that Mr. Schloeffel had about some of the content of the book. Mr. Schloeffel commented on the concerns of global warming and that the material is inaccurate and only has a one-sided argument. Mr. Schloeffel explained that we are not giving all of the evidence and we are only teaching to one-side of the topic. Mr. Schloeffel stated that the teaching is more of a hypotheses and not a theory and that we

are doing a disservice to our students. Mrs. E’Nama explained that 9th grade does have a component of environmental topics and that there is more taught on climate changes in the 9th grade curriculum. Mr. Weldon echoed Mr. Schloeffel’s concerns and asked if we are teaching skepticism. Mr. Weldon asked if lesson plans could be provided to show that we are teaching both sides of the argument. Mrs. E’Nama explained that the theories are taught based on the best evidence that we have at the given time.

Mr. Gamble commented that the book is a tool and that the teacher does not need to teach exactly from the book. Teachers can teach both sides of the argument and feels that we need to teach our students all sides of the topic. Ms. E’Nama explained that we have plenty of other options for critical thinking and that our teachers have been working over the years to use other resources to teach other than a textbook.

Mr. Kopicki explained that lesson plans are based on the standards and we are bound by the standards. Mr. Kopicki feels that our teachers are doing a good job and are teaching our kids to be well-rounded.

Mrs. Collopy commented many topics are emphasized in this biology course, climate change is not emphasized. Mrs. Collopy commented that there probably isn’t a textbook that doesn’t have a global warming topic.

The committee approved the book to move to the full board for approval.

Book Recommendations—*Illustrated Man and Image Grammar*—Dr. Walloff, K-12 Language Arts Supervisor, presented information on reading book choices and the process of how teachers select the books. The summer reading books process was also explained. Students have a choice from one book on the approved list and then a book of their choice. Each year there is a required book and Dr. Walloff explained that they read varied genre, authors and topics.

There was some discussion on the book. Mrs. Collopy questioned if the *Illustrated Man* will be a required book. Mrs. Darcy also wanted clarification if the book being proposed was going to be a required book. Dr. Walloff clarified that there was a misunderstanding that when this book was presented last month at curriculum that it was not clear that this was a book to be added to the optional reading list. Dr. Walloff explained that this book is only being added to the optional book list for 9th grade honors English and that this would not be a required book. Mr. Kopick and Mr. Gamble thanked Dr. Walloff for the additional explanation.

Dr. Walloff also presented *Image Grammar* a proposed supplement book to be added to our grammar instruction. Dr. Walloff explained the curriculum scope and sequence for grammar and how grammar is being taught K-12. Dr. Walloff also explained how students are assessed throughout the school year for writing and grammar. Dr. Walloff explained that grammar is a tool to help students become a better writer. Our standardized test scores show that our students perform well when it comes to writing and we want to empower our students and give them the tools to become even better writers.

Mrs. Collopy expressed that she does not care for the book and some of the explanations that are in the book. Mr. Schloeffel agreed with Mrs. Collopy. Mrs. Darcy asked if the number of books being requests is the correct amount. Dr. Walloff explained that this is not a consumable book and that each teacher would have a class set.

Dr. Walloff commented that we currently have a teacher who is piloting the book and that the feedback has been positive.

Mr. Gamble asked if we using the entire book as the only resource. Dr. Walloff explained that the entire book would not be used cover to cover and that there are other resources that are used.

Mrs. Darcy questioned if there is more of a focus on grammar in 9th grade. Dr. Walloff explained that in 9th grade honors there is a focus on the more advanced writing skill of style.

Mr. Kopicki asked if this is just a supplement. Dr. Walloff explained said yes, this is to help make our good writers even greater.

Mrs. Collopy asked the committee if the book was approved to be sent to the full board. The committee agreed; however, Mrs. Collopy again expressed her disapproval of the book and would not vote for approval at the next board meeting. It was asked if the full board does not approve the book what would happen. Dr. Walloff explained that the committee of 9th grade teachers would need to try to find another book.

Update/Information:

Update on Elementary Math Program Review—Mr. Kratz, K-12 Math Supervisor, gave a brief update to the 11 different elementary math programs that the district is evaluating. The group is using a scoring rubric and each question is assigned a point value. Each program being reviewed is using the same criteria. Mr. Kratz shared some of the feedback from the teachers on some of the programs. Mr. Kratz went over the timeline and explained that between now and April the goal is to complete the evaluations of the remaining 5 programs and the group will determine which programs to pilot. The specific ratings for each program will be shared and a recommendation on which programs to pilot will be presented at the May curriculum meeting. In the summer of 2017, teachers will go through training and curriculum writing for the pilot programs.

Mrs. Evans asked if Everyday Math will still be used while the other programs are being piloted. Mr. Kratz said yes, Everyday Math will still be used in the classrooms that are not part of the pilot program.

Mrs. Collopy asked how many programs will be piloted. Mr. Kratz explained that if we have 3 programs, then each of those programs will be piloted. Piloting any more than 3 would not work well.

Update on Elementary Report Card—Dr. Bolton, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education, gave an update on the elementary report card process. Dr. Bolton explained the different representatives on the report card committee and what were the committee's priorities. Some of the 'must haves' were to have a shorter reporting document, to be able to view growth across the academic year, maintain comments, letter grades and clear and consistent academic language. Some of the decisions made by the report card committee was to be able to utilize the parent portal option in Infinite Campus, to move elementary to trimesters, continue the use of letter grades in grade 5 and 6, change the layout, and to improve the clarity and consistency of the language.

There was much discussion around the letters grades and why only certain grades would have letter grades. Mr. Schloeffel questioned why only letter grades for 5th and 6th. Mrs. Collopy questioned why not include letter grades for 3rd grade. Mrs. Collopy does not agree that letter grades should not be only limited to 5th and 6th grade and suggested that 3rd graders could handle having letter grade. Mrs. Collopy also questioned why this communication about the letter grades was not being communicated to the community. Dr. Bolton explained that the committee came to a consensus that it would be appropriate for letter grades to be used in 5th and 6th grade and that this was not communicated with the community because he felt that this information should be shared with the board first.

Mr. Gamble asked if the report card comments are 'canned' comments or are they customized comments. Dr. Bolton explained that comments for specialists are canned but they have the option to use their own comments. Mr. Gamble encouraged the use of custom comments. Dr. Bolton explained that the committee has expressed the importance of the comments.

Mrs. Collopy asked if the attendance summary can be changed. Dr. Bolton explained that there are some items that we are not able to change due to the program but already has a request in with the vendor to make this change. Mrs. Collopy also questioned the language on the success standards and would like to see the wording ‘respects all members in the school community’ be removed.

Dr. Bolton explained the timeline for the report committee. The report card committee still needs to finalized the success standards and the academic language. The next meeting for the report committee will be February 27, 2017.

Mr. Welden thanked Dr. Bolton for his efforts and the efforts of the committee. Mr. Welden wanted to make it clear to the public that the board has the final decision on any recommendations. The board has an obligation to provide what is best and does not need to go with what is recommended by the report card committee.

Update on Middle School Schedule Committee—Dr. Davidheiser, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education, gave a brief update on the middle school schedule process. The focus group has been formed with a panel of students, parents, teachers and administrators. The first meeting went well and the goal is by the end of the 2nd or 3rd meeting to have a philosophy for what middle school in Central Bucks should look like. Updates will be shard on the district website as the meetings progress.

Mrs. Collopy and Mr. Welden commented that they appreciated the way the initial parent meetings were handled and communicated. Mrs. Darcy commented that she, along with some of the other board members, attending a portion of the first meeting and was pleased with the progress.

2017-2018 School Calendar—Mr. Kopicki presented a revised 2017-2018 school calendar and briefly spoke about the calendar. Mrs. Collopy asked if there are 5 snow days—could one of the early staff development days be removed instead of adding to the end of the school year. Mr. Kopicki is asking for an understanding that each school year is different. There is some flexibility in the calendar but there are some contract obligations for staff development and adjustments to the calendar would need to be reviewed.

The calendar was approved to move to the full board for approval.

Mr. Kopicki presented an overview of his vision development plan. This is based on five pillars: Teaching and Learning, Technology, Finances, Operations, and Community Partnerships. The plan is scheduled to be completed by June 2017. All 23 principals are leading staff members through a vision activity that will help determine the themes for the Teaching and Learning pillar. Mr. Jason Jaffe, Director of Technology and Innovation, is leading the work on the Technology pillar and is utilizing the Future Ready framework. Mr. Dave Matyas is working with the Finance Committee to develop a long range budgeting tool for the district. The Board has just approved a feasibility study that will assist in setting priorities for the Operations pillar. Surveys will be developed, and Parent and Community member focus groups will be help in all three clusters during the spring, to allow feedback from all members of the Central Bucks community.

Meeting adjourned at 9:09