

CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes June 14, 2017

Committee Members Present

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

Mr. John Gamble

Committee Members Not Present

Mrs. Sharon Collopy, Chair
Mr. Dennis Weldon

Dr. Jerel Wohl

Others in Attendance

Mrs. Beth Darcy, Board President
Mr. Glenn Schloeffel, Board Vice President
Mrs. Karen Smith, Board Member

Mr. Ed Tate, Director of Communications

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mrs. Darcy

REVIEW OF MEETING NOTES

The May 18, 2017 Curriculum Committee Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved without changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A seventh grade Holicong student asked for the board's consideration to a change in policy that he believes discriminates against students such as himself. As an eighth grader, he will be taking a ninth-grade math class. Current district policy dictates that he will not receive the same high school credit as a ninth grader taking the same class. The student thanked the board for their time and thoughtful consideration to a change in policy.

Mr. Kopicki commended the student for speaking to the board regarding the policy, and held him up as an example of the type of student that makes the district so successful. He assured the student that the board is aware of the policy, and that there has been discussion between Cabinet members. There is some public school code that needs to be reviewed. Mr. Kopicki asked for the student's patience while the policy is discussed in detail, and assured the student he will be in touch with him before the end of the summer.

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INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/UPDATES

Recommendation for Approval:

Dr. Davidheiser introduced Mr. Scott Berger, K-12 Social Studies Supervisor, who will discuss the resource for the approved 2017-2018 Advanced Placement Psychology course:

“AP Psychology Textbook – *Myers Psychology for AP* – D. Myers & A. Fineburg”

Mr. Berger discussed the process for choosing the textbook. Teachers from each of the 3 high schools, most of whom had taught the Psychology elective in their buildings, explored different textbook options. They surveyed other districts, teachers, supervisors and narrowed the field to two top choices – Pearson and Myers. Myers was chosen by the group because they felt it aligned best with the college board curricula and released exam questions.

Mr. Berger and the teachers will be working with the textbook representative before the end of August to explore the online features offered with this textbook. The original version of this textbook was one of the most popular in the country. During the teacher review, this second edition appealed to the teachers for its appropriateness to the course, content, readability, ancillary physical and online materials. It corresponds to topic areas on the exam and provides more study aides than the first edition. The group will be working with the textbook representative on the multi-media supplemental package called LaunchPad, which includes an online textbook and an e-book. The district would have access to that supplemental package with the price per book. The same publisher is currently used by our AP US and AP Euro teachers, who are very happy with the resources provided and with how well the students are prepared for the exam. Surrounding districts like Council Rock and Hatboro-Horsham also utilize this textbook. The Social Studies Coordinator at Hatboro-Horsham, who is their lead AP Psychology teacher, has trained our teachers for two days using resources from the book. The group valued his recommendation strongly. The group will continue course work using the book over the next several days.

Dr. Davidheiser commented that the recommended purchases reflect the enrollment in the course in each high school. Mrs. Darcy noted that the number of students enrolled (460) was a very good number for a first-year course offering. She asked if there was an idea of the split between students choosing to take the course – Dr. Davidheiser stated that it was about 75% of students who chose to take it on a semester basis. There will be scheduling issues not only on the student side but the staffing side that will be addressed this summer. Feedback will be given to the committee in the fall to show how the scheduling worked out. Mrs. Darcy thanked Dr. Davidheiser for taking on the challenge of offering a balance of courses to our music students.

Dr. Davidheiser also noted that the teachers will be attending a 5 day workshop this summer in preparation for this course. Mr. Schloeffel asked if the curriculum was written or was being written. Mr. Berger noted that the course is written in draft form and will continue to be finalized over the next few days. Mr. Kopicki asked if textbook approval is given tonight, when could the committee expect to review the curriculum. Dr. Davidheiser stated that the plan was to present in August. Mr. Kopicki stated

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that he felt it would be best to present at the end of July to allow the committee time to review prior to the August meeting. He would like committee presentations to be given to board members a week ahead of scheduled meetings so that board members have time to properly review the recommendations. He will email the district to notify them of the expectation that materials be submitted to board members a week before, copying their direct supervisor (Dr. Bolton or Dr. Davidheiser) so that they know board members have been notified. Mr. Kopicki would like to make it a practice to give board members sufficient time to review materials before committee meetings.

Dr. Davidheiser noted that with AP courses the district is adopting the College Board curriculum. Their curriculum is the broad stroke, the district adds some personal touches to address our student needs. The district curriculum is audited by the college board. He stated that Mr. Berger will get the completed curriculum to the board for review within the requested time frame.

Mr. Schloeffel asked how many AP courses are offered by the district. Dr. Davidheiser noted that with the addition of this class we now have twenty.

Recommendation for Approval:

Dr. Davidheiser introduced Mrs. Laura E'Nama, K-12 Science Supervisor, who will discuss the resource for the 9th Grade Academic and Honors Science textbook:

"9th Grade Science Textbook – *Earth Science* – E. Tarbuck & F. Lutgens"

In February, the committee approved the courses for 9th grade academic and honors science. The need for a textbook was established this past summer as part of a three-year journey for science courses. Seventh grade was addressed first, this past school year 8th grade science was addressed. The coming school year will focus on the needs for 9th grade science students. The books currently being used were written for grades six through eight. This middle school series of books do not really address the needs of a high school course. The science teachers feel very strongly that a more rigorous textbook in line with a high school course is needed. The current books lost online support in 2012, and teachers feel online support is very important. The current books do not have all the resources to supplement the new 9th grade course that is planned. The current books have been used by the district since approximately 2004. Mr. Schloeffel asked if textbooks are evaluated on a more routine basis, he commented that it seemed a very long time to have a textbook. Mrs. E'Nama noted that typically textbooks are reviewed in a six-year cycle, which is usually when online support is no longer available.

Mrs. E'Nama's goal since taking the Science Supervisor position in 2014 has been to review the middle school textbooks and update the curriculum. It was decided that it would be best to review the middle school curriculum over several years to avoid any gaps in a student's experience. The ninth-grade textbook was not replaced earlier because a new course was being planned and an appropriate textbook would be chosen to support that curriculum.

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All virtual options were reviewed, as well as hybrid options. A hybrid option was chosen by the teachers because it has a physical book as well as an online platform. The choices were narrowed to 4. During an in-service day in April all 9th grade teachers reviewed each of the options and unanimously chose one.

The teachers agreed the chosen textbook was aligned to the curriculum, was rigorous, and has many resources that they were excited about. A trainer is coming to work with the teachers to get them set up to utilize the textbook and go through the program. The textbook can be fully integrated with Infinite Campus. The program has several supports for students who are less proficient in reading, as well as support for ESL students. There is a full online platform including note-taking, virtual labs, videos, tutorials and assessments. There are lab manuals and many tools that the teachers are very excited about. The program supports best practices, so each unit gives teachers ideas on how to integrate with other subject areas. The publisher is currently used in Biology and Chemistry, and the use of a familiar platform could help facilitate the transition from ninth grade science to high school classes.

Mrs. Darcy requested verification that this book would be used for academic as well as honors science. Mrs. E'Nama stated that it would be utilized for both. The textbook provides a nice foundation for academic classes, and honors classes receive supplemental instruction at a higher level with a companion text.

Mr. Schloeffel asked if there were multiple textbooks reviewed and what the review process was. Mrs. E'Nama stated that there is not a large pool of textbooks to choose from, and that there were 4 that fit our curriculum nicely. About 15 ninth grade science teachers reviewed each textbook and filled out an evaluation form. In the end, they felt that the better resources offered with the online platform of the *Earth Science* textbook made it the best choice.

Textbooks would be provided to the entire ninth grade, and is budgeted for 2017-2018 school year. Mrs. E'Nama noted that each year there is a budgeted amount for replacing a science textbook. Mr. Schloeffel asked that each board member receive a copy of the book for review. Copies were distributed to committee members, but Mr. Schloeffel felt that if the district were buying 1500 textbooks the publishers should be able to provide more copies for the board to review. Mrs. E'Nama noted that it was not past practice, but moving forward she would certainly be able to accommodate that.

Recommendation for Approval:

“School Board Policy #217.1 Revision”

Dr. Davidheiser noted that while this item was listed under Recommendations, he would like to initiate a conversation regarding School Board Policy #217.1. The basis for the policy is the District's graduation requirements. Policies 217.1; 217.2 and 217.3 list the various ways which students can acquire credit typically outside the norm of the “brick and mortar” curriculum offerings at our schools. He stated that two things have become apparent – one is that the requirements have become somewhat restrictive for students, most especially related to math. The second issue is regarding Policy 217.2, which gives

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guidelines for awarding credit through a college course, and Policy 217.3 which gives guidelines for awarding credit through an online college course. Courses that are submitted in an application very rarely mirror our curriculum. As such, supervisors find it very hard to give approval for those courses. Giving approval often leaves gaps in the criteria for meeting the requirements for graduation. The revision of the School Board Policy is an attempt to collapse all three revisions into one. For core subject areas, a student could apply and be approved for a college or online course. They would then sit for the district's assessments to ensure that they have met the requirements for the scope and sequence of the course. For a non-core related course for which there are no district level assessments, the recommendation is that a supervisor would review the course to be sure it met district requirements.

The proposed revision speaks to those two situations. Approximately 75 students apply yearly for 217's, most of which are in the math and world language area. Students request a 217 most commonly because they are trying to accelerate to get to AP level courses. Another type of student that applies for a 217 is an early graduate, there are typically 8-10 applicants for early graduation.

The proposal is to revise the policy to take away the math pre-requisites needed. Often students meet the requirement in grade or final exam, but are missing by 10 to 15 points in the PSSA. If we have a rising sophomore that is attempting to 217 and accelerate in math, the nature of the current policy becomes restrictive. The current policy holds back students that could be very successful in accelerating.

The proposed revision includes the elimination of some items related to math and some collapsing of 217.1; 217.2 and 217.3. Dr. Davidheiser noted that it is believed that if district level assessments are taken where applicable, or if the course has been approved as meeting the criteria during the evaluation process, the student could receive the credit and accelerate through. Currently Policy 217 is very confusing to many students and can be restrictive. The proposed changes do not overhaul the policy, just make it more inclusive for students. It also allows the district to confidently state the student has met the requirements of our core academic courses.

Mrs. Darcy asked if the current math requirements in Policy 217 mirror our elementary requirements. She noted that it did not seem equitable to allow for lower PSSA scoring in the high school level if we do not do that at the elementary level, preventing elementary students from getting in to accelerated math classes. Mr. Kratz noted that at the elementary level we do not have criteria, rather they are identifying characteristics looked at by a team to determine if an elementary student should progress to accelerated math. Mrs. Darcy does not believe that reflects the actual practice, citing the letter sent home to students identifying the parameters. She understands that there may be a difference in that communication from building to building. However, her concern is that we apply the ability to identify students who show potential to be successful in accelerated classes to the whole student experience, not just relaxing requirements at the high school level. She would like consistency in the policy.

Mr. Kratz noted that he has had a concern regarding this issue at the elementary level for a long time. He would like the characteristics to be used to identify students who would be successful in accelerated

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classes, not used to exclude those who would not benefit. He believes the district is trying to be consistent and believes the revised policy would mirror the approach at the elementary and secondary level.

Mrs. Darcy noted that 6th grade accelerated students should also be taken in to consideration. She was interested in statistics on how many students continue in the accelerated track. She stated that students meeting PSSA benchmarks and getting good grades in the class can still not be recommended to continue in accelerated math. She believes that change happened around the time PSSAs became more common core focused. She gave the example of 6th grade students not moving on to accelerated math without their parents understanding that was the case. Her concern is that the language in the proposed revision does not address the student's experience as a whole. She believes giving students a chance to accelerate at the younger grades will result in far fewer consequences in their transcript.

Mr. Schloeffel asked if a student can get back on the accelerated track if they are removed. Mr. Kratz noted that Policy 217 is the avenue for that to happen.

Mrs. Darcy asked for verification that no advanced placement courses would be approved for credit. Dr. Davidheiser indicated that was accurate because the college board owns those courses. The district is audited to ensure we are delivering the appropriate instruction. In order for credit to appear on a transcript, the district must prove we delivered instruction to the student.

Mrs. Darcy noted that the district is about to start a large policy review. PSBA is in the process of reviewing policy, and has asked that any changes made at the district level be minimal. She indicated that if this policy change was not an emergency, it should be tabled for a future agenda. The district Policy Committee will begin in earnest in July, and asked that this revision be brought through that committee. Mr. Kopicki agreed that the recommendation should be to move this revision to the Policy Committee.

Update/Information:

Dr. Bolton introduced Mr. Richard Kratz, K-12 Mathematics Supervisor, for an update on the elementary math pilot program.

Mr. Kratz presented an update on the program review. At the last update, several programs still required review including the current program *Everyday Math*. At this point the review has been finished of all materials and the group is ready to move forward with the pilot.

Ten programs were reviewed, using the same rubric for each. Mr. Kratz presented the committee with the exact score of each program, which were then ranked by percentage of points earned. Focus was placed on the top 5 programs, then the group discussed which programs would best meet the specific needs of our district. *Math in Focus*, *Go Math*, *My Math*, *Revision 2.0* and *Everyday Math* had a range of 7% in their scores. All programs provide superior instruction, however the teachers determined that there were actually two groups within the top 5 programs. The top two, *Math in Focus* and *Go Math*, are in one group. The three remaining make up the second group. The difference between the top two

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programs and the other three are the consistently high scores given at every grade level for *Math in Focus* and *Go Math*. The lower three programs had inconsistency in rankings between the grade levels. Teachers believed if they utilized one of the lower three programs there would be a need to supplement instruction at certain grades. Once you begin supplementing instruction, consistency in content suffers. The top two programs would not require supplemental instruction at any grade level beyond what a teacher would normally provide as a matter of personal style.

Mr. Kratz indicated there was considerable conversation regarding the *Everyday Math* program, which has been successfully used by the district for 20 years. After much conversation, the group determined that every opportunity was given to *Everyday Math* to show that they should be piloted. The hard decision was made not to pilot that program because it would not be in the best interests of the district.

Go Math and *Math in Focus* are both from H&H Corporation and use the same site to access the technology resources. Teachers can be trained on that site, and no matter which program is ultimately selected there will be no need for any new training in how to access the technology.

Go Math is a very popular program in the United States. Mr. Kratz presented their webpage, which provides a lot of information about the program. The program is used by over 7 million students worldwide. It also offers a lot of professional development, which will help our teachers be comfortable implementing the program. One of the program's biggest strengths are the varied resources available to teachers. Our teachers commented that they loved that it was a mastery program where the expectation is that a student master a skill before moving on. Teachers loved the organization of the program, making it easy to use for teachers and students. It also enables parents to follow along. An online tool entitled the 'Personal Math Trainer' allows tracking of the analytics of a student's progress. It enables customized instruction based on student need. The 5 "E's" (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate) are the way the instruction is organized and creates routine for students and their learning. These are the same 5 "E's" used in science instruction so students and teachers will be familiar with that style of delivery. Co-teaching with Special Education students will be supported by the organization and breakdown of instruction in this program. Teachers believed the technology was very strong with this program. The program also offers flexible delivery, which is important due to the fluctuation in technology currently available in each classroom. It allows for a digital delivery of instruction, or a printed delivery, or a mix of both.

Math in Focus is Singapore math, which is very popular. Singapore math moves in progression, a concrete pictorial is followed by an abstract instruction. It is the exact same approach which is used in Singapore, this program is just the United States version. Singapore Math promotes fewer topics done more in depth. This program really emphasizes that concept. The teachers reviewing this program liked that it is a mastery program that offers less topics to be covered, but more depth of instruction. That is the goal of every math program currently on the market. The teachers liked the rigor of the program that includes true problem solving with multi-step strategies that will challenge our students. The professional development offered by the program is also very good. Trainers for the *Math in Focus* program are required to have used the materials in an elementary classroom, giving them expertise in the use of the program in a classroom setting. Technology is very strong with the program.

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Mr. Kratz indicated that the two programs are quite different. *Math in Focus* was developed for use in Singapore and then translated to a U.S version. There is more practice involved in the *Math in Focus* program. The idea of concrete pictorial and then abstract is unique to *Math in Focus*. *Go Math* is a U.S. based program.

Mr. Schloeffel asked how long each program has been in existence. Mr. Kratz stated that *Go Math* is the 2015 edition, but the program has been out for several years. *Math in Focus* has been out for several years as well, it started to gain attention in the early 2000's.

Go Math is being used by 138 districts in Pennsylvania. *Math in Focus* is being used by 37 districts, each considered premier districts with which we often compare our own.

Mrs. Smith asked if any of the teachers thought that *Math in Focus* was too difficult. Mr. Kratz indicated they thought it was challenging but also supported. The Special Education teachers were also excited by this program and its use of concrete pictorial followed by abstract. Mrs. Smith commented that currently Special Education students utilize a different textbook. Mr. Kratz noted that an important piece of the pilot is that this textbook will also be used by Special Education students.

Mr. Kratz equated a pilot program to a jigsaw puzzle. There is an intended outcome, but there are a lot of important pieces that make up the picture. Our pieces include using the pilot in a robust way utilizing a lot of classrooms (at least 3 regular education classrooms in every grade), using the pilot in special education classrooms, implementing the program in classrooms with all different achievement levels, and using multiple teachers but only one pilot program in each elementary school. He provided a list of every teacher and every school that will participate in each pilot program.

There will be a lot of training opportunities for the teachers. Trainers will be coming in on Thursday and Friday of this week and every pilot teacher will be trained. Training days have been arranged for next school year to provide ongoing training and answer any questions. The companies have committed to providing individual teacher instruction if necessary.

Mr. Schloeffel asked how the two groups would be coalesced for the final overview. Mr. Kratz outlined that there will be a standard pre-and posttest for each program and that data will be reviewed. There will also be surveys done with teachers, students and parents to collect information on how the programs met their needs. Those items should provide good data to make the final decision. Mr. Kratz will also be contacting other districts utilizing the programs to get their feedback.

Mr. Kratz noted that there is no cost associated with the pilot programs, the companies are providing free materials for the 54 classrooms. The district will supply manipulative kits for the teachers. There are savings involved because the district will not be buying *Everyday Math* resources for students in the pilot programs. The cost of the manipulative kits will be more than offset by the savings.

Mr. Gamble asked if neither program is chosen, will the students who participated be behind in their studies. Mr. Kratz acknowledged that the students in the pilot program will have a different experience than the other students since they will be learning less content but at a deeper level. If one of the

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programs is selected, no one will be at a disadvantage because the same topics are taught. If neither program is adopted, which would not be the recommendation of the teacher group because the programs were chosen for their strength in instruction, it would be unavoidable that the students in the pilot program would need additional instruction.

Mrs. Darcy noted that it was an unfortunate side effect in making a major curriculum change, which is why the district has continued with some curriculums for 20 years. She stated that it was important that curriculum be reviewed, and that any gaps could be filled in as necessary.

Mr. Gamble asked what the cost of the programs would be if the district decided to move forward with one of them. Mr. Kratz stated that Elementary Curriculum materials are expensive, however these programs would not be more expensive than the district is currently paying.

Mrs. Darcy noted that the decision was made last year not to continue to supplement *Everyday Math*. The technology for *Everyday Math* is still available, but does not work as seamlessly as the district would like. Mr. Kratz indicated that the decision could be that the current program, consisting of *Everyday Math* plus the supplemental materials the district has provided, would be better than either *Go Math* or *Math in Focus*.

Additional Topics:

Mr. Schloeffel asked about the desk situation at East – providing left handed students with appropriate desks. Dr. Davidheiser stated that Mr. Lucabaugh had his custodial staff distribute the desks evenly throughout the classrooms. Mr. Lucabaugh plans to purchase more of the universal style desks in the coming years.

Mr. Schloeffel also asked about the size of the desks being provided to students taking SATs. Dr. Davidheiser indicated that the issue had been addressed.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Next Meeting: August 9, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.