

CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Curriculum Committee Meeting
January 10, 2018

Committee Members Present

Mrs. Sharon Collopy, Chairperson
Mrs. Beth Darcy
Mrs. Jodi Schwartz
Mr. Dennis Weldon

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

Others in Attendance

Mr. Glenn Schloeffel, Board President
Mr. John Gamble, Board Vice President
Mrs. Tracy Suits, Board Member

Mr. Jason Jaffe, Director of Technology & Innovation

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Mrs. Collopy

REVIEW OF MEETING NOTES

The November 8, 2017 Curriculum Committee Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved without changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/UPDATES:

Overview of February Professional Development Days

Staff Developers Suzanne Dailey, Michele Meyers and Brian Novick provided an overview of the February Professional Development days. A teacher testimonial video was presented. Teachers spoke about the importance and quality of the professional development offered by Central Bucks, and how the information provided aids them in their ability to connect with and teach their students. The keynote speaker for February 15 will be author George Couros. Staff Developers were able to hear Mr. Couros at a state conference held two years ago. They were inspired by his message and believed he would be an excellent resource for CB teachers.

The Elementary Teacher Professional Development day will begin with the keynote address from Mr. Couros. Teachers will then choose from a wide variety of offerings (74) for Session Two and Session Three. Staff Developers survey teachers to get feedback on the information offered at professional development events. The end-of-the-day opportunity for teachers to come together and review the day is overwhelmingly popular. That opportunity will be offered at the end of the February sessions, conducted by teacher leaders.

The Secondary Teacher Professional Development day will begin with teachers choosing from a wide variety of offerings (74) for their morning session, and the afternoon session will include the keynote speaker Mr. Couros. District initiatives and goals, and feedback from previous years, are used to help shape the session offerings. Outside specialists are also included - one of several specialists will be a doctor from CHOP, who will be speaking about concussion protocols.

Staff Developers heard Mr. Couros speak at another local school district last year, teachers and administrators from that district will be invited to attend Mr. Couros' keynote address at CB.

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All resources utilized in each session will be available on OneNote for teachers to access, allowing teachers the ability to obtain information offered in sessions they were unable to attend. Staff Developers plan to utilize Twitter to share the activities happening during the day.

Mrs. Suits noted that 74 sessions were an amazing number of offerings, and wondered how many each teacher would have to opportunity to participate in. Ms. Meyers answered that teachers would pick two sessions, but would have access to all information on OneNote and be able to share information during the end of the day review session. Widely attended sessions are also offered again during the summer. Mrs. Schwartz commented that she had the opportunity to present at previous CB Professional Development sessions and felt it was a great experience.

Overview of Library Curriculum and Services K-12

Mr. Scott Berger (Social Studies & Library Curriculum Supervisor) introduced CB Librarians Susan Thomas (Pine Run Elementary), Bridget Fox (Tohickon Middle School) and Matt Pecic (CB High School South), who presented an overview of the services provided to teachers and students K-12.

Ms. Thomas noted that there were four strands to the elementary library curriculum. “Effective Researchers” teach students how to find what they are looking for – how materials are organized in the library, how to use the Dewey Decimal system, and how to use the online library catalog. Responsible use of Google for research is covered, as well as the use of multi-media offerings.

“Information Management and Responsible Citizenship” teach students how to use information once they’ve found it. Developing and answering questions, the use of key words, focusing big topics into smaller more manageable units, and how to ethically cite sources are covered in this strand. Note-taking is taught utilizing different mediums including note cards, organizers and OneNote.

“Effective Communicator” teach students how to share the information they’ve gathered. Focus is placed on using 21st century skills to share information, utilizing iPads and multiple apps for digitally sharing information. Responsible use of digital presentation skills is covered in this strand.

“Enthusiastic Readers and Lifelong Learners” teach students how to live what they’ve learned. Students participate in Reading Olympics, author visits, book clubs, book “tasting” parties and summer reading clubs. Maker spaces are offered in some libraries, offering students learning opportunities to make and create.

Ms. Fox noted that it was especially important for middle school librarians to be very familiar with library offerings. Statistically the middle school years show the largest drop off in student reading for fun. Librarians familiar with the library content can encourage students to continue reading by finding material that will appeal to them. To promote student participation and interest, middle school libraries are purposely colorful, engaging and optimistic atmospheres. To capture the middle school student’s attention, libraries are constantly changing landscapes. Games and initiatives like Reading Bingo and Blind Date with a Book, displays of books based on holidays, and “Book Talks” are used to get students involved with the library.

Visiting authors are also hosted by middle school libraries. Pulitzer Prize winning author Michael Cottman (Shackles From the Deep), author Ann Bausum (March Against Fear), Jordan Sonnenblik (popular author of young adult fiction) and Holly Black (Newbery medalist) recently spoke to CB

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students and teachers. Some of the authors offer a “writer’s workshop”, offering interested students an opportunity to work directly with the authors. Middle School librarians recognize the challenges faced by middle school students and look to develop supportive relationships by being advisors for student council, hosting Relay for Life clubs, tech squad clubs, book clubs and Diversity clubs. All CB middle schools have Reading Olympics teams, and Unami hosts the area-wide event.

Mr. Pecic focused on some highlights offered at the high school level. High school librarians work collaboratively with teachers to provide curriculum support. “Book Talks” and reading initiatives are utilized to increase student engagement. Mr. Pecic presented a video showcasing the library at South and the variety of ways students use the area. A student-created commercial was also shown, encouraging high school students to participate in Reading Olympics. Mr. Pecic advises the Titans Connect group at South, which focuses on students with autism and Down’s Syndrome. The group has hundreds of student participants, and a video was presented on the Titan’s Connect prom held each year.

Mr. Pecic noted that, while CB libraries offer traditional activities, the information presented tonight show that the libraries also offer unique and exciting opportunities for students. Mr. Gamble commented that he believed the library is the heart of every school, and that CB librarians do an amazing job. Mrs. Darcy remarked that she enjoyed viewing materials at CB West library that are an archive of Doylestown history. She noted that the Board is trying to support the needs of the CB libraries. Dr. Kopicki spoke about the five-year district plan to address department needs, all middle school and high school library needs will be addressed in some way. He also commented on how impressed he was by the turnout of CB librarians that came to support their colleagues during their presentation. He thanked the librarians for their excellent service to CB students.

Proposed Partnership with PA Biotech Center

Dr. Davidheiser presented information on the opportunity for CB to build a relationship with the Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center of Bucks County, located near the Doylestown Airport. The Center houses approximately 100,000 square feet of laboratories and production facilities. Dr. Tim Block (Executive Director), Mr. Lou Kassa (Operations) and Mr. Tim Kelly (Vice-President of Norwood Construction) met with CB representatives to discuss the possibility of the Biotech Center housing an experiential learning course for CB students. Discussions, in the infancy stage, are ongoing about an AP Chemistry class for about 15 students (five from each high school) to be held at the Center. Dr. Davidheiser will provide the committee with more specific details as the plan moves forward. Mr. Schloeffel commented that he very much approved of the concept, and asked how the state requirements for clearances would affect the proposed plan. Dr. Davidheiser noted that adherence to clearance requirements would be a definitive part of the final plan. Mrs. Darcy commented that MBIT recently received clarification on the clearance requirements for their students who have internships with community businesses. She believes the clarification was that a manager of a department needed clearances, not necessarily every employee. Mrs. Darcy remarked on the length of the proposed class and the time of day students would be attending. Dr. Davidheiser noted that part of the application process for students interested in the class would be ensuring there were upfront details regarding the time commitment (as proposed: three marking periods/class until 5 p.m. twice a week) Mrs. Darcy thought the research component of the class that would require the late day time commitment was terrific, but worried that it may make it very difficult for some students to participate. Students with other activities would not be able to stay until 5 p.m. She also noted that there is a summer program at

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the Center that takes one student from each high school. She was very glad the district was offering the opportunity to more CB students.

Mrs. Darcy asked if any consideration had been given to having the class for four marking periods, eliminating the need for an extended day. Dr. Davidheiser noted that AP Chemistry students are typically scheduled for Organic Chemistry during the fourth marking period. Mrs. Darcy commented that since the proposed class only included 15 students, there would not be a significant impact on class schedules if those students were to remain in AP Chemistry for four marking periods. Dr. Davidheiser agreed, and noted that the intent had been that students would return to their buildings for the fourth marking period. Eliminating the possibility of taking Organic Chemistry placed an additional requirement for taking the AP Chemistry class at the Center. Mrs. Darcy reiterated that she felt the proposed class was a great idea. Mrs. Collopy agreed, and asked if students would be providing their own transportation and would be scheduled for a "C" lunch. Dr. Davidheiser answered that, if it could be managed, students would be scheduled for a "C" lunch. Bussing will be provided to the Center, but not back to school once class was done. Students would be required to provide their own transportation after class. Mrs. Collopy asked if students would be allowed to drive themselves to and from class, Dr. Davidheiser noted that they could. Mrs. Collopy asked who would be responsible for writing and reviewing the applications. Dr. Davidheiser and Laura E'Nama (Science Curriculum Supervisor) are writing the application, and there will be teacher involvement in selecting the students. Mrs. Schwartz wondered if, given the additional access to technology at the Center, would the curriculum content change. Dr. Davidheiser noted that the class would not change, fidelity to the curriculum would be maintained. Mr. Gamble thanked Dr. Davidheiser for bringing back the partnerships with the community that had been missed in the district.

Dr. Davidheiser informed the Committee that information regarding the change in the marking period due to the school closings was distributed today. The new calendar was published and is available on the website. Mrs. Collopy noted that she was disappointed that the district is not using the finals schedule that had been used in the past. The district used to use a finals schedule at the end of first semester like the one still used at the end of the year. This changed sometime between 2010 and 2014. She commented that some students will be taking a final and still have two additional days of class post-test. She believes this is a waste of teacher and student time and seemed to have been a punishment for teachers and students. She doesn't think it is too late to fix it for this year but would at least like the conversation started for next year.

Mrs. Collopy commented that it had been on the December schedule to discuss the change in name for the Algebra 3 course from Intermediate Math Concepts to Algebra 3/Trigonometry. She noted that the name had already been changed in the program book. Since the December meeting did not happen, she wished that there had been an item on tonight's agenda offering some details regarding the name change. Dr. Davidheiser explained that the name change was done to meet NCAA requirements. The course had been flagged by NCAA, not due to content, but due to the fact that "Intermediate" was part of the course name. The district did not want student athletes to have taken courses that would not be credited due to NCAA requirements. Mrs. Collopy agreed that the name change made a good impression on transcripts for any student, regardless of whether they were student athletes.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Next Meeting: February 14, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.