

CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Curriculum Committee Meeting
April 11, 2018

Committee Members Present

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

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

Others in Attendance

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

Mrs. Geanine Saullo, Principal – Lenape Middle School
Dr. Alyssa Walloff, Curriculum Supervisor - English
Mr. Richard Kratz, Curriculum Supervisor - Mathematics

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

REVIEW OF MEETING NOTES

The March 14, 2018 Curriculum Committee Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved without changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/UPDATES

Middle School Schedule Reflections: Dr. Davidheiser thanked the Board for the support and resources necessary to institute a new middle school schedule. He presented an overview of the implementation, including data gathered from focus groups and teacher feedback. He reviewed the Common Core standards from 2010, and the PA Core Standards adopted in 2013. The PA Core Standards represent a shift in instructional intent from high school completion to college-and-career readiness for every student. CB Middle School schedule changes were made in 2012-2013 in response to the PA Core Standards, including longer class periods, reduction in specials, elimination of Business/Computer courses and a shift in Teacher Team Planning to the end of the school day.

In response to a review of metrics, survey and focus group data, Committee suggestions and a change in philosophy from 2012-2013, the middle school schedule was changed in 2016-2017. Changes included fifty-minute class periods, increase in specials offerings per student, inclusion of Innovation and Technology courses, and Teacher Team Planning time embedded into the school day.

A review cycle for the initial year of the new schedule was presented. Important pillars for the schedule were detailed, including student-centered classrooms, social-emotional development, and technology and digital citizenship. The pillars were used to develop a philosophy, grounding the schedule to the idea that “CBSD middle schools educate the whole child by meeting the physical, social, intellectual and emotional needs of adolescents in an engaging, creative environment while maintaining rigorous, interdisciplinary instructional programs and opportunities”.

Dr. Davidheiser reviewed some Committee “non-negotiables”, including challenging curriculum, technology integration and social/emotional programs. He presented a comparison of the old middle school schedule to the new schedule, as well as details of the current middle school bell schedule. The current bell schedule includes nesting periods, where core content teachers have planning time and specials are offered.

In January, a form survey was sent to all middle school teachers asking for feedback regarding the schedule changes. Teachers had a month to complete the survey, there were 182 responses (52% of teachers). Parents and students were not surveyed at this time since the schedule change had only been

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in place for half the school year. Parents and students will be surveyed in the first week of May. Dr. Davidheiser presented details on the strengths and weaknesses of the new schedule identified in the teacher survey. Mrs. Schwartz asked if the survey results could be sent to the board members, Dr. Davidheiser noted it would be sent. Teachers indicated aspects of the new schedule that meet the philosophy include exposure to more specials, team meeting time for teachers, new InC & IT courses, and addressing social and emotional needs through Advisory. Weaknesses include lack of common Resource time, Advisory restrictiveness/frequency, Specialists and other teachers not being able to meet with students, and over-planning of Advisory.

The positive impact on learning provided by the new schedule include better Team preparedness through Team planning, longer Resource maintaining more student academic focus, and improvement of digital citizenship and technology skills. Negative impacts on learning include limited frequency of Resource and staffing issues regarding the nesting of 7th grade specials. Mrs. Smith noted she was impressed that after only a semester of the new schedule, students were showing improvement in their technology skills.

Comparative GPA data for the first half of the year was presented, which showed little change. An attendance report was done, checking for any changes in absenteeism or tardiness – changes were minimal. Dr. Davidheiser summarized that the new schedule has shown to be an excellent improvement for students.

Adjustments for the coming school year include changes to Advisory, which would offer consult periods when students could seek help from any teacher. Mrs. Schwartz expressed concern that the 19-minute Advisory period would not offer enough time for students to have access to their teachers. Dr. Davidheiser noted that students can see several of their teachers during Resource, and Advisory time could be used to see teachers that cannot be seen during Resource.

A more natural flow for Advisory was suggested, allowing for individualization for teams, grade levels and buildings. A review of the ninth-grade curriculum is also planned for the in-service week at the end of the school year. Changes in the nesting schedule will be investigated regarding age-appropriate scheduling for 7th graders. Mrs. Darcy asked if negative feedback regarding the 7th-grade nesting time period could be due to the change seventh-graders experience in school start times. Dr. Davidheiser indicated it seemed to be a time management issue more than anything else.

Staffing calculations were reviewed, and no increase in staffing is indicated for the 2018-2019 school year. An overview of the 9th-grade athletics program was presented, over 300 ninth-grade students are participating. Mrs. Collopy noted the importance of offering the 9th-grade athletics program and wants the momentum to continue.

Dr. Davidheiser reviewed the next steps, which include the parent/student survey in May, changes to structure of schedule, email blasts to the community, staffing and curriculum changes. Mr. Weldon thanked Dr. Davidheiser and the team for all the work done regarding the schedule changes and the data review. He encouraged better teacher participation in the surveys. Mrs. Collopy offered her thanks, noting that a review after six months offers an opportunity to perfect the schedule. Mrs. Schwartz thanked Dr. Davidheiser for his inclusion of teachers and their feedback in the process. Mrs. Darcy also thanked Dr. Davidheiser for the due diligence shown by him and the CB staff, and for presenting a full picture regarding the impact of the new schedule. She invited comment from teachers attending the meeting. Andrew Kane, Jessica Weaver, Lisa Welch, Mary Pat Mars, and Mary Pellegrino offered comments about Advisory, Team planning time, Resource, concerns regarding challenges faced by Special Education teachers who don't have Resource every day, the positive impact of the addition of InC classes, and richer conversations regarding secondary options for special needs students.

RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL

AP Computer Science Principles: Mr. Richard Kratz presented details regarding the proposed AP Computer Science Principles class. He thanked the teachers in the department who worked diligently in the development of the course. He noted that the College Board has reported there will be nine million STEM jobs in the next decade that will require computing experience. He offered a comparison of the two CB computer courses currently offered – Computer Science Principles and Computer Science A. The proposed AP Computer Science Principles course is a more well-rounded course. He noted the difference in the exam for the AP course, which includes two projects that need to be submitted to College Board. The AP course aligns with the goal of attracting traditionally under-represented student populations to the computer science field. Mr. Kratz presented a timeline of the course since it's inception in 2016-2017, including teacher training, scoring rubrics and teaching materials.

The Committee agrees to move the course to the full board for approval.

Textbook Adoptions: Math 7; Pre-Algebra 7; Pre-Algebra 8; Algebra 3/Trigonometry: Mr. Kratz presented an overview of the proposed textbooks for several classes. Characterization of the courses, text description and reasons for adoption were reviewed. Online support offered for students, including companion websites such as CalcChat and Aleks, were detailed. Costs for textbooks, online access and handbooks were presented. Mrs. Collopy commented that Math 7 students are on track to have Algebra 1 in ninth grade. She asked why students taking Math 7 and Pre-Algebra 8 would not use the recommended Pre-Algebra 7 textbook. Mr. Kratz noted that the Math 7 course teaches all pre-algebra standards. Pre-Algebra 8 teaches all the eight-grade standards. The Pre-Algebra 7 course is meant to transition students from a sixth-grade curriculum to a seventh-grade curriculum, including the eighth-grade standards content necessary for them to move directly into Algebra 1. Mrs. Collopy remarked that the adoption of a new math program at the elementary level may show changes in student abilities. She wondered if a five-year review cycle of the curriculum would provide a better picture. Mr. Kratz indicated there will be curriculum development for the Math 7, Pre-Algebra 7 and Pre-Algebra 8 courses completed during the summer, and they will be brought to the Committee for review. Mrs. Darcy asked if the purchases were budgeted for this fiscal year, Mr. Kratz noted they were.

The Committee agrees to move all recommended textbooks to the full Board for approval.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/UPDATES

One Book-One School – Lenape Middle School: Dr. Alyssa Walloff and Mrs. Geanine Saullo presented a proposal for Lenape Middle School to adopt the novel *Counting by 7s* by Holly Goldberg Sloane as a one book-one school initiative. The novel would be required summer reading for all Lenape students, which would then be incorporated in theme teaching throughout each grade level. One book-one school initiatives have been successfully completed at other CB schools. Dr. Walloff provided a recap of the recommended novel. The one book-one school initiative will provide a shared experience for all Lenape students, and will be incorporated into Advisory lessons on community, acceptance and overcoming obstacles. Mrs. Collopy asked if students would be required to read the novel over the summer and then have one free pick from the summer reading list, Dr. Walloff indicated that was the case. Mrs. Collopy remarked she liked that the novel wasn't completely dark. Mr. Schloeffel asked if ninth-grade students would have interest in a novel that also appealed to seventh-graders. Dr. Davidheiser noted that the novel ties well into Advisory themes that will be appropriate and interesting to each grade level. The Committee approves the initiative.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Next Meeting: May 9, 2018