

Curriculum Committee of the Board Meeting Minutes November 3, 2011

The Curriculum Committee of the Colonial Board of School Directors met on Thursday, November 3, 2011, in the Superintendent's Conference Room. The meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m. by Chairman Alan Tabachnick. Present were Board President, Gary Johnson; Board Members: Bernie Brady, Mel Brodsky, Sue Moore and Beth Suchsland; Superintendent, Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer; Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Dr. Liz McKeaney; Curriculum Supervisors Sergio Anaya, Maria Bellino, Donna Gaffney and Kathleen Hamill; community members Tom Davis and Linda Doll; and Marge Gramlich.

Public Comments: There were no public comments on the agenda.

2012-13 Budget – Dr. McKeaney spoke about the budget as the focus for the meeting. She highlighted curricular resources to be considered for implementation in next year's budget.

World Language: A recommendation of the Curriculum Review completed last year is an upgrade to the Language Lab. The current lab is ten years old and the *Windows 7* upgrade will render the software obsolete. Sergio Anaya, World Language Curriculum Supervisor, provided information about the video/audio capabilities of the upgraded lab which addresses all four components: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Improvements will include an upgrade to 31 desktop computers, and a video live server to allow for easy video streaming between teacher and student. This will allow facilitation of AP and online courses and attract more students to the non-AP courses which are in development.

MyChinese360: One of the recommendations from last year's Curriculum Review was a distance program for world languages not offered at CSD. Mr. Anaya provided an update on the three students who are continuing with the *MyChinese360* program. Students are chosen based on their interest and academic suitability for this self-paced learning environment. Expansion of this program is under consideration.

MyON: This is a digital library with on-line books according to reading level, content, and grade level which helps to engage students and parents. *MyON* was piloted last spring at Whitmarsh Elementary School. K-3 buildings now have access to the program which will be expanded to include K-5 next year. Maria Bellino, Science Curriculum Supervisor, provided information on the use of this tool to assist with the integration of processes and skills across subjects. She explained that students can access a dictionary with each book as well as an audio component which pronounces words. Classroom book selections have been aligned with curriculum. Students have home access online to teacher-selected books as well as the entire library. Kathleen Hamill, Language Arts Curriculum Supervisor, noted that *MyON* is a closed, digital environment from a reputable children's publisher with an extensive amount of leveled books and informational texts across content areas.

Textbook Approval: Maria Bellino presented a request to approve the purchase of an AP Biology Textbook. She noted that this inquiry-based textbook supports the *four big ideas* (Diversity of Life; Biological Systems; Living Systems and Life Processes; and the Interaction of Biological Systems and their Properties), which are needed at the college level, as well as new labs. Curriculum for AP Biology is scripted by the College Board. In order to teach the revised AP Biology curriculum, it is necessary to purchase this new textbook. Some components of this book are available on-line. Ms. Bellino noted that AP Biology is currently one of our highest enrolled classes; 80 students are expected to enroll next year.

ESL Budget/Translation Services: Sergio Anaya, ESL Curriculum Supervisor noted that we must budget for those 68 -70 students in CSD whose first language is not English. Mr. Anaya stated that federal funding for our immigrant students was discontinued because we do not have enough enrollments to receive funding for the immigrant population. Resources were identified to provide translated documents and to speak with parents via conference call. Use of Title III funding is designated for technology, professional development, teacher support, and parent outreach. CSD must also budget for translation services.

Curriculum Updates:

- Common Core Standards - Kathleen Hamill provided an update on the Common Core Standards, which will affect how we revise our curriculum. She noted that because of CSD's rigorous curriculum, we should only have to make minor adjustments. Ms. Hamill stated that at this time Pennsylvania has no plans to add any more content because our standards are already closely aligned. Ms. Hamill reported that the Standards were adopted in July 2010, but have not yet been made policy by the State.
- Keystone Exams/Local Assessment Validation - Donna Gaffney provided an update on Keystone Exams, State graduation requirements linked to course exams. She noted that districts will have the option to use either benchmarks provided by the state or their own benchmarks. However, if CSD opts to use its own benchmarks, we must pay to have them validated. As many as five exams could be involved. A webinar providing more information about the cost and procedure will be held on November 17th. Mrs. Gaffney noted that this topic will be revisited when more information is learned.
- Strategic Plan-Mid Point - Maria Bellino spoke about the status of the mid-point review of the Strategic Plan. She noted that a meeting including community and Board members; and teaching and administrative staff is being scheduled.
- Supervision and Evaluation – A committee of teachers, building administrators and Curriculum Supervisors have conducted meetings to examine the professional growth model for teachers. To assist in fostering continual growth among teachers, they are currently researching an on-line assessment tool.

Conference Requests: A conference request was reviewed for the Social Studies Curriculum Supervisor, along with four Social Studies teachers from PWHS (2), CMS and RP to attend the National Council for the Social Studies in Washington DC from December 2 through 4, 2011. This would add value to professional development for teachers in the areas of civics, economics and geography. A combination of funds from the Curriculum budget and building funds from

PWHS, CMS and RP will be used to cover expenses for this conference. Consensus was given to present this conference request at the Board Meeting on November 17, 2011.

Ms. Bellino shared that the Science Department received a \$1,500 award from Quaker Chemical to be used to publish the Science Journal.

Ms. Bellino also noted that PWHS engineering students took first place in the Engineering Mousetrap Competition held at Widener University. Participants were from Delaware, Montgomery, Chester and Bucks County.

There being no public comments, Chairman Tabachnick adjourned the meeting at 5:44 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Marge Gramlich
Administrative Assistant to the Director of
Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment*