

Curriculum Committee of the Board

Meeting Minutes

January 7, 2013

The Curriculum Committee of the Colonial Board of School Directors met on Monday, January 7, 2013 in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m. by Curriculum Committee Chair Mel Brodsky. Present were Board President Alan Tabachnick; Board Vice President Susan Moore, Board Members: Leslie Feingold, Christina Frangiosa, Beth Suchsland, Heather Palmer; Superintendent, Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer; Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Dr. Liz McKeane; Curriculum Supervisors: Sergio Anaya, Donna Gaffney, Kathleen Hamill and Maria (Bellino) Wileczek; community member Linda Doll; and Bunnie Swetkowski.

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

Federal and State Mandates – Dr. Liz McKeane noted that there are no changes to the Federal law on *Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)*. All students must be proficient on state reading and math assessments by 2013-14 (Keystones in grade 11), as well as meet test participation goals, school attendance and graduation requirements.

Dr. McKeane shared that with regard to Pennsylvania state requirements, Pennsylvania has applied for a flexibility waiver to use the new School Performance Profile (SPP) to meet AYP. The SPP provides a building level "academic score" to be used for teacher evaluation, as part of the Educator Effectiveness System. The SPP delineates indicators of academic achievement.

Dr. McKeane noted that she and Mrs. Wileczek have met with building principals to share information they received from Pa Department of Education webinars and MCIU presentations regarding a new transition plan proposed for the PA State System of School Assessment for the 2012-13 school year. Among the changes highlighted was the PSSA Writing Field test beginning administered in grades 3, 4, and 5. Kathleen Hamill, Language Arts Supervisor, added that no special preparation is required for staff or students due to the field tests status this year. She has been working with reading specialists and building administrators to prepare for the upcoming pilot and changes to the curriculum to align with the Common Core State Standards. Dr. McKeane noted that she is confident that CSD students will perform well on all tests because of the professional development provided to teachers, as well as the on-going efforts to adjust and monitor the curriculum to meet demands of the federal and state mandates and a 21st century global economy. Other changes included information about the upcoming high school Keystone Exams: Algebra I, Literature, and Biology.

Teacher Supervision/Evaluation – Dr. McKeane shared that the Educator Effectiveness System – Act 82 continues to provide for mandatory teacher evaluation; however, this is the first time that state law will require student achievement to be considered as part of a teacher's evaluation. This rating tool is designed to evaluate teachers based upon classroom observations, teacher specific data, elective data and building level data. For the 2013-14 school year, teacher observation counts for 85% of the evaluation and building level data counts for 15% (PSSA, PVAAS, Graduation, Promotion, Attendance, AP, SAT, PSAT).

Common Core Standards – Dr. McKeane asked Curriculum Supervisors to share information regarding the PA Common Core Standards:

Mrs. Hamill, Language Arts Supervisor, responded by noting the shifts in ELA/Literacy...

1. Balancing Informational and Literary Text
2. Knowledge in the Disciplines (reading across the content areas)
3. Text Complexity (prepares students for college)
4. Text Based Answers (discourse and writing)
5. Writing from Primary Sources
6. Academic Vocabulary

Kathleen Hamill shared that professional development is underway through K-12 Language Arts meetings, review of training modules by Reading Specialists, curricular revisions aligned with PA Common Core Standards in Grades K, 6 and 9. A transition plan is currently being developed for curriculum and assessment revisions and sharing with staff over the winter, spring and fall of 2013.

Donna Gaffney, Math Curriculum Supervisor, noted that the PA State Standards required many adjustments to align with the Common Core Standards. Key shifts include greater focus on fewer topics, improved connections across grades and an emphasis on conceptual understanding and application. At the elementary level, curricular changes have been made in grades K-2 and grades 3-5 are currently underway. Resources are being updated as needed. She also shared that PLT and half-day professional development sessions have been used at the secondary level since the introduction of many math concepts are now shifted to an earlier age. Curricular and assessment work with teachers and teacher leaders will continue through June.

Mel Brodsky asked Mrs. Gaffney about the decline in PSSA scores in the middle and high school. He noted that it's not just happening at CSD but in all districts. Donna replied that different areas are being assessed, and that we have no way of knowing that ahead of time. She added that our other testing assessments test achievement more positively.

Informational Updates:

Keystone Exams: Administration of the Keystone Exams will begin at PWHS on January 9th for Algebra 1, Biology and Literature.

WES Blue Ribbon Nomination: Whitmarsh Elementary has received a first round nomination for Blue Ribbon School. The Curriculum Team and Whitmarsh Elementary Representatives will submit the information requested and highlight various initiatives that contribute to the success of our schools.

Grants / Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC): Dr. McKeaney noted that Mrs. Debra Harris, CSD Foundation Treasurer, has been developing proposals and submitting them to Jim O'Donald who finds potential donors to support various gifted student projects at Colonial. These donors are interested in supporting our schools while taking advantage of the EITC.

Acceptance of PECO Award: As a result of her application to the PECO Energizing Education Program, Maria Wileczek, Science Curriculum Supervisor announced that CSD has received an award given in conjunction with the Franklin Institute. Two CMS science teachers participated in a two-day professional development and fifteen sixth-grade students will participate in an energy-focused community outreach project. This award is valued at \$1720 and is included on the January Board Agenda for acceptance.

CMTHS Follow-up: CMTHS and CSD have developed a new schedule for remediation for our tech students at CMTHS. It began on January 3rd. Both Susan Moore and Mel Brodsky acknowledged this positive change to the program, and noted that they were very proud that Colonial was in the forefront of this initiative. Our reading and math specialists have visited with CMTHS personnel to model remediation skills. Beth Suchsland suggested that we invite CMTHS personnel to our PLT or Best Practices Fair to share additional instructional methods.

PD Updates: Donna Gaffney noted that professional development will be ongoing as related to continuous school improvement goals; at the elementary level – metacognition, at the secondary level differentiated instruction.

Sergio Anaya, Social Studies and ESL Curriculum Supervisor, shared that SIOP Model Training was provided for teachers on December 17th. CSD currently has 93 ELL's, speaking approximately 16 – 18 languages. With this model, teachers are trained in strategies; ESL teachers work collaboratively with classroom teachers producing good outcomes.

NAEP: Dr. McKeaney noted that selected 8th grade students have been chosen to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress on March 5. CSD has no choice with regard to participation; once selected, participation is mandatory.

Conference Requests – A conference request was reviewed for Kim Clemente and Carol Bucci, CMS Gifted and Reading Specialist respectively, to attend Teachers College in New York City on February 18-21, 2013 for the Reading and Writing Project. Expenses will be paid by CMS building funds. Consensus was given to present this request at the Colonial Board of School Directors Meeting on January 10.

Discussion Items: There being no discussion items or public comments, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bunnie Swetkowski
Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent