

Curriculum Committee of the Board Meeting Minutes September 10, 2012

The Curriculum Committee of the Colonial Board of School Directors met on Monday, September 10, 2012 in the Superintendent's Conference Room. The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Curriculum Committee Chairman Mel Brodsky. Present were Board President Alan Tabachnick; Board Vice President Sue Moore; Board Members: Leslie Feingold, Christina Frangiosa, Julie Knudsen, Kathleen Oxberry and Beth Suchsland; Superintendent, Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer; Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Dr. Liz McKeaney; Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Karen Berk; Curriculum Supervisors: Sergio Anaya, Maria Bellino, Donna Gaffney, Kathleen Hamill and Eileen Spector; PWHS Principal Jason Bacani; PWHS Guidance Counselor Lisa Genovese and College Counselor Pat Tamborello; community member Linda Doll; and Marge Gramlich.

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

Naviance: PWHS Guidance Counselor Lisa Genovese provided an overview of this web-based interactive tool which allows students to build an electronic portfolio to help them to successfully achieve post-secondary goals. She noted that this tool will also help us to track students' post secondary progress. Among the features of Naviance are the ability to communicate with students via email, its connection to Power School and parental access. Students can also take interest inventories to assist in choosing courses and careers.

PWHS College Counselor Pat Tamborello highlighted some of the features of Naviance. Links to detailed information, application criteria and scholarship availability for a variety of colleges are available to students. A mailing was sent home to parents communicating this information and students are receiving additional information and assistance at school. Dr. Gorodetzer suggested exploring whether students could be trained on core components and then act as mentors to other students.

PWHS Start-up: PWHS Principal Jason Bacani spoke about the high school opening this year. Mr. Bacani reported that PWHS administrators worked collaboratively with Dr. McKeaney and the Curriculum Department to facilitate a Department Head meeting during the summer where leadership, vision and challenges were discussed and collaborative goals were set. Mr. Bacani also noted that a variety of students were invited to a forum to share their successes and challenges this summer. Scheduling and technology (BYOD) were the main concerns expressed by students.

Induction Highlights: Donna Gaffney spoke about meeting the needs of the 15 new teachers during the Aug 21-23 induction. Mentors and Master Teachers also participated in supporting roles for new teachers. Dr. McKeaney thanked curriculum supervisors and district administrators for their team efforts during induction.

Project Based Learning: Sergio Anaya discussed efforts to build upon 21st century skills and integration through Project Based Learning. Working collaboratively with teachers, project-based election units were developed for every K-5 school. All essential and unit questions are aligned with state standards, i.e., "What is the role of the individual in creating change?" A video to

launch the election unit is currently in production. Each school will be choosing/voting on a different issue. The unit was designed to be able to encourage critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Atlas Rubicon: Atlas Rubicon, curriculum mapping software, will be rolled out in multiple phases. Curriculum was imported from the HUB over the summer. January is the goal for all curricula to be rolled over and ready to go. Phase II will include additional PD for staff. This will make it easier to develop curriculum, search for content, run analytical reports, conduct gap analyses, etc.

Preliminary PSSA: Math Curriculum Supervisor Donna Gaffney reported preliminary PSSA data noting increased proficiency in algebraic concepts in grades 3, 5 and 8. Grade 11 students maintained 80% or higher proficiency in selected areas. Mrs. Gaffney spoke about the student supports needed and available inside and outside of the classroom. She said that the focus of the PSSA Math Prep course will be shifted to address Keystone and Common Core standards.

Pupil Services & Special Education Director Karen Berk reported that a careful analysis of preliminary data was conducted of the 52 PWHS Special Education students who took the 2012 PSSAs. Of those students, most received math instruction in the regular education or modified classes and curriculum. Solutions for providing supports to all at-risk students (including those with IEPs) within the confines of the school day and schedule, especially for those who attend CMTHS, is a challenge. Mrs. Berk shared that meetings are scheduled with the Tech School to explore creative solutions for student supports. It was further shared that of the 52 Special Education students who took the PSSAs 9 (17%) entered the district after 8th grade and an additional 9 students (17%) have lower than average cognitive abilities.

Language Arts Curriculum Supervisor Kathleen Hamill shared some reading trends; including strength in grades 3, 5, 8 and 11 in the interpretation and comparison of non-fiction text which is Common Core compatible. She noted that tiered reading supports are available to students before, during and after school.

Members of the Curriculum Department will continue to analyze data for patterns and trends. More information will be provided when additional data becomes available.

Keystone Exams: Dr. McKeaney reported that current information regarding Keystone Exams will be made available under *parent links* on the district's webpage. Dr. McKeaney and Mr. Bacani will meet to discuss scheduling of the Keystone exams which will be done in three phases. The goal for completing the first phase, to align curriculum with Keystone, is Dec. 3rd.

Conference Requests: There were no conference requests at this time.

Discussion Items: There being no discussion items, the meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

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