

South Middleton School District
Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting

Monday, November 23, 2020 – 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

SMSD Administrator:

Ms. Melanie Shaver-Durham - Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Federal Programs

SMSD Board:

Ms. Stacey Knavel

Ms. Elizabeth Meinkrantz

Ms. Bethanne Sellers

Members of the SMSD Curriculum Council

Agenda Items:

- I. Status update on Curriculum Mapping with Janet Hale, educational consultant.

Brittany Staab, Rice

Amanda Wain – Iron Forge

Dave Bandura – YBMS

Tracy Mersch – BSHS

Janet Hale was available to teachers working on the curriculum via 2 zoom sessions. Mel decided not to pull teachers from classrooms in November, particularly since the secondary schools were remote.

All teachers reported their curriculum groups were working to “babycode” standards for their respective grade levels (grades 9-10 together) which means the standards are dissected and directed to push up to the next grade, push down to the grade below, or remain in the current grade level.

Grades 9-10 indicated due to the sheer volume of ELA standards, they have achieved about 2 of 5-6 sections.

Mel’s plan is still on track for possible completion of mapping by March 2021, as it has been shifted from the original completion date of December 2020. Need to continue to move forward because the elementary curriculum teachers need to pilot phonics materials.

- II. Upcoming consideration

- A. English credit requirement at BSHS

Tracy Mersch, English Department Chair, presented reducing the number of English credits to graduate from 5 credits to 4

Currently, freshman take 2 credits, followed by 1 credit each subsequent year. Proposal reduces the freshman English requirement to 1 credit, allowing additional electives for students

- B. Curriculum and Textbook Process

Math curriculum Kindergarten through Geometry is complete and ready to publish through Atlas, curriculum software program; it looks awesome and very teacher and parent friendly

Family and Consumer Science will be next in January 2021, followed by Social Studies and World Language

Math Textbook Selection Process

Used rubrics to select 2 textbooks/resources, piloted these 2 resources in fall and will make recommendation for K-5 and 6-8 for Board approval

Next, Algebra is narrowing to 2 choices, will pilot 1 unit from each resource

III. Dr. Amber Sessoms, Diversity Consultant

Administered a screening to administrators and Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium Audit (MAEC) Pillars of Practice to help identify needs of SMSD district.

This audit screens for equitable school areas in the PA Department of Education pillars of practice including: Self Awareness, Data Practices, Academic Equity, Discipline Equity, Family and Community Engagement, Equity Policy. Goal is to make district more diverse, but first make it a safe space where all people can see themselves coming to work and stay.

The coalition team is purposefully small, they will roll out plans to the district's equity champions, then community. It is essentially a 3-5 year plan. At the end of this year, there will be an action score card to check on progress.

Communication on the school website for all stakeholders should be added. We need to be "collectively compassionate".

The long-term plan to move forward will be to gauge internal self-awareness then move into curriculum and professional development without pushback and pitfalls.

For future goals, an equity policy for our district (only 37/500 in PA have this currently) and a comprehensive plan. Again, this is a 3-5 year plan and implementation.

IV. Staff Survey – Instructional Time

Results were shared during Board meeting on Nov. 16. Mel presented idea to lengthen school day to 2:45 and eliminate Zoom Fridays. After further surveys:

All teams did not want to change M-TH schedule

HS teachers felt losing instructional time on Friday would be more stressful

Fridays are flexible, there was mixed feedback but many departments felt this was important instructional time to cover content

6th grade team had concerns and needs solutions – Ally Hertz explained wraparound time is used for regular education recently, causing issues for those in Special Education

Question: What do teachers need?

Improved communications

Flexibility on Friday – important to continue zoom time in hybrid setting

Handbook addendum leaned heavily on supporting students not punitive repercussions during hybrid and remote learning times

Discussions during this committee meeting reveal there are procedural pieces that need strengthened for teachers for remote instruction including:

cameras and required usage,

consistent message from principals to teachers to students,

establish purpose, parameters, expectations for elementary/secondary remote learning