

**BARRE SUPERVISORY UNION
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING**
Spaulding High School Library
September 25, 2017 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tyler Smith (BC) - Chair
Ed Rousse (SHS) – Vice Chair
Kristin McCarthy (BT),

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Joe Blakely (SHS)
Sarah Pregent (BC)

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Jennifer Nye, Principal (BTMES)
Jacquelyn Ramsey-Tolman, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Jim Taffel, Principal, (BCEMS)
Brenda Waterhouse, Principal (SHS)

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – The Times Argus Karen Heath Lindy Johnson Lauren May

Mr. Smith called the Monday, September 25, 2017, meeting to order at 5:33 p.m., which was held at the Spaulding High School Library.

1. Review / Approval of Minutes – August 28, 2017

On a motion by Mr. Rousse, seconded by Mrs. McCarthy, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the August 28, 2017 Curriculum Committee Minutes.

2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda

None.

3. Literacy Presentation Grades K – 2

Lindy Johnson addressed the Committee and provided an overview of Literacy Curriculum for students in grades K – 2. The Power Point presentation included information on Guiding Principles for Literacy Instruction (purposeful, clear objectives, daily reading and writing, use of engaging materials, and choice of reading materials). Practices are aligned, including use of the same alphabets and hand writing materials. The continuum is from Fountas & Pinnell and includes very engaging material. Cursive is introduced in 3rd grade and includes reading only, no cursive writing is taught. Ms. Johnson provided information by grade level. Pre-k students are exposed to books and literacy through “play”. Kindergarten reading instruction is through the workshop model using ‘The Units of Study for Teaching Reading’ (by Calkins, et.al.) Learning includes the basics, such as learning about books ‘front to back’, that reading is ‘left to right’, and learning words. First grade students use Units of Study for Teaching Reading. Instruction includes guided reading in small reading groups. Second Grade also uses Units of Study for Teaching Reading, and includes guided reading with small reading groups. Second graders begin receiving instruction and practice on choosing ‘just right books’.

Implementation of Orton Gillingham Classroom Approach for Instruction began this fall. This is a new approach to teaching/learning phonics. Most Kindergarten and First grade staff took a course through the Stern Learning Center to prepare for implementation of the new curriculum.

K -2 writing curriculum is performed using the workshop model of Units of Study for Teaching Writing (Lucy Calkins). This curriculum has engaging and intentional teaching points, including the use of ‘power words’.

Ms. Johnson advised regarding interventions at BCEMS and BTMES. There was a loss of support when the East Central Vermont Literacy Consortium ended. Reading Recovery intervention is no longer offered. Grant funding requirements make it difficult to use Title Funds. ‘Big’ testing of students in K – 2 occurs in December and May.

In response to a query regarding the tracking of progress, Ms. Johnson advised that she feels progress is being made. Some reporting may be available through Infinite Campus. Kindergarten staff have advised that incoming kindergartners are showing improvement in 'letter identification' scores, and 'known words'.

4. Literacy Presentation Grades 3 – 8

Karen Heath addressed the Committee, providing an overview of Literacy Curriculum for students in grades three through eight. Ms. Heath's Power Point presentation included information on Guiding Principles for Literacy Instruction. The Guiding Principles include lots of in-school reading and writing time, a gradual release of responsibility, targeted learning, with students working towards ownership of learning, including progressions for reading and writing. Students' choice of reading material is critical in engaging students to read, and likewise, choice of writing topics, encourages more writing. There are fewer 'group' or 'whole class' books assigned in these grades.

Ms. Heath advised regarding 'Units of Study for Teaching Reading and Writing' (by Lucy Calkins et al), which is utilized for students in grades three through six. The workshop model includes; Explicit Teaching', 'Guided Practice', 'Independent Practice', and 'Sharing'. Units of Study were written to be aligned with Common Core.

Ms. Heath provided an overview of interventions in place for BCEMS and BTMES. In addition to interventions for grades 3 - 8, there are programs in place to provide opportunities to advanced readers in grades 3 through 8. Ms. Heath provided an overview of the programs, which include Renaissance Readers, PSTL (Problem Solving Through Literacy), and enrichment classes. PSTL replaces the ELA class for BTMES 7th/8th grade high achievers. The PSTL program includes community service and submission of an end-of-year vignette.

The 7/8 grade ELA program was written by teachers with guidance from Ms. Heath. Curriculum is aligned with Common Core, with the Calkins Learning process and rubrics built in to the units.

Areas being addressed include; teaching grade level standards, moving towards Proficiency Based Learning and Grading, and includes collection of bodies of evidence connected to standards.

A document titled 'NARRATIVE: LEARNING PROGRESSION, GRADES 2 – 6' was distributed. Individuals broke into pairs to utilize the document and interpret the meaning of a story. Ms. Heath polled each group regarding their 'grade level' of interpretation.

Mrs. Ramsey-Tolman advised regarding professional development including this year's implementation of using GSP (Great Schools Partnership), which assists with identification of performance indicators, creation of proficiency scores, sharing information with parents and students, and changing the culture of grades in middle school. Two GSP consultants are working in the BSU, one at Spaulding and one at the middle schools.

BSU literacy events include the summer reading program (book groups, race to read, and summer reading bingo cards), literacy nights, free books to all students (in June), and the annual Barre Writing Contest. Students are encouraged to participate in the Young Writers' Project.

5. Literacy Presentation SHS (Brenda Waterhouse)

Mrs. Waterhouse addressed the committee to provide an overview of SHS Literacy Curriculum. Mrs. Waterhouse presented a Power Point Presentation titled 'Spaulding Literacy Offerings'. Ninth grade students' read Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens, with instruction including discussion protocols, close readings, and the Rule of Three (highly guided, somewhat guided, and independent; with the initial focus being on feedback. Structured, guided feedback includes revisions to written assignments. Freshman and sophomore English is now a year-long class with an embedded honors option. Freshman English (and Social Studies) focuses on Explanatory writing. Sophomore English (and Social Studies) focuses on argumentative writing. Sophomore Honors can be taken with AP US History/US History. Sophomore Honors is also available independent of AP US History.

Options for Junior and Senior students includes semester long courses in Prose, Poetry & Plays, Language & Composition, New England Authors, Journalism I & II, Literature of War, and Modern American Voices. Courses alternate on years. There are currently 14 other courses that may be alternated (based on interest). All courses must have NCAA approval prior to being offered.

There are currently two AP course offerings; AP Language & Composition (41 students) and AP English Literature & Composition (11 students). These AP courses are year-long, which is more beneficial to students, as AP testing occurs in May. These AP courses are available to juniors and seniors and can be taken in lieu of Junior / Senior English classes.

English courses are more flexible than in the past, with options such as flexible pathways, on-line courses, and dual enrollment courses (each student receives 2 college course vouchers from the State). It was noted that teachers' syllabi are available on the school web page.

Students who struggle with literacy take English 103 (Read 180). Read 180 is a computer based program designed to meet students at their level. The class is taught by a Special Educator and a general educator and covers ELS standards at the grades 3-6 level. Approximately 25 students will take the course this year. English 203, 303, and 403 are primarily for Special Education students. These semester long classes have enrollment of 26, 15, and 12 respectively. There is a class limit of 15 students and a Special Educator is present in each class.

Additional supports include; proficiency support (Homework club), Advisory time, before and after school time, extra support provided by Mrs. Benoit, and reassessment plans (which are, as part of proficiency based learning, available for all subjects).

Professional development includes writing strategies with Joey Hawkins.

The Summer Reading assignment, which is in its second year of a school-wide implementation, consists of book groups. There is a large selection of books for students to choose from (44 this past summer). The book group leaders are staff members (teachers/support staff/administrators). Mrs. Waterhouse conveyed concern regarding the trend of parents seeking early dismissals in an effort to have their students excused from participating in assemblies. Summer book group discussions were held on an 'assembly schedule'. Students who were dismissed early, did not participate and therefore did not fulfill their summer reading requirements. Parents need to be made aware that assemblies are part of the school day and students need to participate.

Enrichment activities/programs are available to students wishing to participate. Enrichment activities include; the annual statewide Poetry Out Loud competition, Vermont Young Playwrights, regular book club meetings (including the Vermont Humanities Council "Vermont Reads" selection and the Green Mountain Book Award Nominees), the National Novel Writing Month, support in the library, Writing Club, Library Poetry Slam Competition, and author visits/talks.

6. Other Business

None.

7. Establish Agenda and Date of Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting will be held on Monday, October 23, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the SHS Library. Topics for discussion will include Homework and Technology Hardware.

8. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. McCarthy, seconded by Mr. Rousse, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin