

**Northshore School District
Curriculum Materials Adoption Committee Minutes
February 3, 2020
3:15 PM
Administrative Center Room 208**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the CMAC, Curriculum Materials Adoption Committee, was held on Monday, February 3, 2020 at the Administrative Center in Bothell, Washington. Chairperson Obadiah Dunham called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Obadiah Dunham (Chair), Rebecca Nielsen (Co-Chair), Tracy Patterson, Niki Smith, Shelby Reynolds, Tiffany Rodriguez, Anne Nielsen, Ayva Thomas, Shannon Colley, Nancy Dodson, Jennifer Ellis, Carlos Lazo, Kim Osgood, Janine Schmoll, Carolyn Urrutia, Jacqueline Probst, and Eli Yim

Absent: Adra Davy

OLD BUSINESS

Review and Approval of Minutes

Obadiah asked committee members to review the minutes from the December 2, 2019 CMAC meeting.

It was MOVED by Shannon Colley and SECONDED by Nancy Dodson to approve the December 2, 2019 CMAC minutes as written.

Obadiah called for the question. The motion carried.

Introduction of New Members

Equity and Diversity Director Chris Bigelow approached Obadiah about having additional representation on the CMAC to provide an equity/diversity lens on curriculum adoptions. Joining CMAC today are Ayva Thomas, Equity and Diversity Specialist and Carolyn Urrutia, Librarian and Equity Team Member at Bothell High School. Members introduced themselves for the benefit of the new members.

Curriculum Adoption Cycle

The State has directed districts to come up with a four year budget plan. In the past, our adoption cycle has spanned 7-8 years, without really knowing whether the budget would be available to cover the projections that far in the future. The adoption cycle has now been reduced to reflect just the four year cycle that the budget plan will cover. Obadiah reviewed the projections and challenges from a budget standpoint.

A member asked how it is determined what will be included in this plan? Obadiah answered that it is primarily driven by the core content areas of English/LA, Math, Science, Social Studies and Health. Other content area purchases are then fit in as needed and as budget allows. Some members mentioned that there are important curricular areas that aren't reflected on the document. Rebecca noted that this document has shifted in purpose from being an overview of all curricular areas and the curriculum refresh timelines to more of a budget guideline. Obadiah also noted that adopting more than one content area curriculum in a short period of time is not as

impactful on secondary teachers, as each adoption only affects teachers in that specific content area. However, for elementary teachers, multiple content area adoptions all affect the same teachers. They want to be sensitive to that impact on teachers, so the document reflects that planning.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA

Writing That Works: Communicating Effectively on the Job – District Supplemental Curriculum for Grade 12 English. New edition of previously approved textbook, with minor changes.

It was MOVED by Nancy Dodson to approve the consent agenda. The motion was SECONDED by Carlos Lazo.

Obadiah called for the question. The motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS FOR APPROVAL

Phono-Graphix booklets *Famous Faces, Times and Places* and *Clubhouse Adventures*

Reconsideration of two booklets excluded from original approval

Meghan Crane – TOSA / Special Education

Meghan noted that these two booklets did not initially meet the standards for equity and diversity at the time of the adoption of *Phono-Graphix*. Those concerns were communicated to the vendor, who made adjustments to the booklets. These texts are “coded” to help students with fluency building and comprehension, and working on their decoding skills.

One CMAC reviewer mentioned that there are still issues with both booklets, including factually incorrect passages in one book, as well as grammatical errors. Another reviewer noted that the section on Martin Luther King that was mentioned in the last review were resolved. Other CMAC members also mentioned grammatical errors, stereotypical pictures, and sexist/outdated references.

Meghan said that the publisher was very agreeable to addressing the concerns brought to them previously, and she would be willing to bring these additional concerns to the publisher. These stories aren’t absolutely necessary to the curriculum, but the company wants to put out a quality product, and she believes they will be responsive to these concerns. Members who are familiar with the program noted that the booklets are not a big part of the program, it can be used very effectively without these booklets.

It was noted that it is not the purpose of CMAC to be quality control for the vendor – it should be the vendor’s responsibility to screen their products appropriately.

Consensus of the committee is to take no action at this time. If the sponsors wish to communicate with the publisher the ongoing concerns, they may do so and pursue CMAC approval for these booklets later if the publisher makes the appropriate revisions.

The Merchant of Venice

Reclassification of District Supplemental Curriculum

Obadiah Dunham – Assistant Superintendent / CMAC Chairperson

Rebecca Nielsen – ELA Teacher / CMAC Co-Chairperson

Members were provided with copies of *The Merchant of Venice* to use as reference during this discussion.

Obadiah opened the discussion by noting that *The Merchant of Venice* is one of many literary works that have

been in use in the district since before CMAC was in existence, and were automatically “approved”. A parent brought a concern to her child’s school where this play was being taught regarding anti-Semitic language and themes in the play. Realizing that the concerns reached beyond one school, the parent met with Christy Clausen in Curriculum and Instruction, and John Helgeson, ELA TOSA. Ayva Thomas in the Equity and Diversity department was also consulted. The parent was then referred to the CMAC reconsideration process. After meeting with the parent and reviewing the text, Obadiah and Rebecca agreed that CMAC needs to review how the material is being taught, whether or not the parent decides to pursue the formal reconsideration process.

Obadiah and Rebecca met with the parent and with a teacher at Bothell High School who teaches this play. The BHS teacher provided a lot of resources she uses with this play to teach about antisemitism, in both the historical and present-day context. The parent also provided resources, included an edition of the play that includes a 180 page editorial at the beginning of the text that provides a good framework to prepare teachers to teach this play. This process has been a constructive process that has included resources and perspective shared by the family and teacher, plus research done by Rebecca and Obadiah. They have created a list of resources and outline so that teachers who choose to teach this play can do so respectfully and knowledgeably.

The specific request to CMAC is to reclassify *The Merchant of Venice* with these parameters:

- Use only specific version of the text that has historical references: *The Merchant of Venice: The Arden Shakespeare*, editorial matter by John Drakakis 2010, published by The Arden Shakespeare 2010, reprinted by Bloomsbury 2019.
- Change approved grade level from grades 8-10 to 10-12
- Teachers using the play must use the approved outline and resources provided, which include:
 - Pre-teaching unit around “what is antisemitism?” and the equity and diversity lens that should be used when reading this play, with resources;
 - Required elements for the curricular unit shall include:
 - Historical background
 - Viewing and guided discussion of the Academy Award winning film *Gentlemen’s Agreement*
 - Student research of recent local and national incidents of antisemitism
 - As students read *The Merchant of Venice*, identify and discuss sections in the play where antisemitism and stereotypes are present

If a teacher elects to teach this novel, they have to be prepared to fully teach it. Teachers have the choice to teach this play or choose another play to expose their students to Shakespeare.

If approved, the curriculum department will gather versions of the play that are currently in the schools and replace them as needed with the approved version.

What is the value of teaching this text, if it requires so much additional work to teach it appropriately? The BHS teacher said she specifically teaches it as an opportunity to draw the correlations and explore the themes. She is passionate about this play and teaching it well. The teacher at IHS is not devoted enough to the play itself to take on the topic and has chosen a different Shakespeare play to teach.

What is the precedence for dealing with such issues with other texts, such as *Huckleberry Finn*? Do we stop teaching such works altogether, or do we commit to thoughtfully teaching texts that may have difficult themes?

What supports would be available for teachers who decide they want to teach this play, especially novice teachers, other than the resources provided in the outline prepared? Those supports would likely come at the building level with the supervising administrator and within the ELA department. It’s important that principals are aware of the optional supplemental curriculum that teachers in their building are using. If the non-approved versions of the

novel have been collected, any teacher who then wants to teach it will have to request the approved version from the CIA department, and would be directed to the approved content outline.

Shelby noted that it is important to ensure that audio and e-book versions are available of any specific edition that is approved. That information should then be included in the unit documentation, with instructions for students on how to access those versions.

It was MOVED by Rebecca Nielsen to reclassify *The Merchant of Venice* as district supplemental English/Language Arts curriculum for grades 10-12, with the following conditions:

- Specific edition to be used: *The Merchant of Venice: The Arden Shakespeare*, editorial matter by John Drakakis 2010, published by The Arden Shakespeare 2010, re-printed by Bloomsbury 2019
- Teachers must follow the requirements found in the *Merchant of Venice Teaching Unit* developed by the NSD Curriculum and Instruction department.

The motion was SECONDED by Carolyn Urrutia.

Obadiah called for the question. The motion carried.

ASSIGN REVIEWERS FOR NEXT MEETING

Reviewers and liaisons were assigned for projected submissions for the March 16, 2020 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 PM.