

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Julie Altman, Christopher Browe, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, Thomas Hurley

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: James Horwitz

Also Present: John J. Brady, Charles Britton, Kathleen Fuller-Cutler, Richard Dellinger, Brian Flinn, Jonathan Furst, Jack Levine Marianne Lippard, Terry Lumas, Marie McPadden, Rocco Palmieri

A meeting of the Curriculum Committee of the Amity Regional Board of Education was held on Thursday, December 13, 2012, at 5:15 p.m. in the Media Center at Amity Regional High School.

1. Call to Order: Julie Altman called the meeting to order at 5:22 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes – October 4, 2012

Motion to approve the minutes from the Curriculum Committee meeting on October 4, 2012 (Ms. Gedansky, 2d Ms. Crocco).

Vote in favor: Julie Altman, Christopher Browe, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, Thomas Hurley

Vote opposed: none

Abstain: Steven DeMaio

Motion passed.

3. Discussion and Possible Action on New Textbooks

Ms. McPadden said that there are two new textbooks to be considered by the Committee. One textbook is about oceanography. The textbook was reviewed and received the highest rating. The second textbook is about woodworking and is basically a manual.

Ms. Altman questioned whether woodworking would be an arts requirement and whether or not there were enough students interested. Dr. Brady said that the class would be classified under career and technical education. Dr. Britton noted that landscaping is being replaced.

Ms. McPadden noted that the oceanography textbook is \$72.25 and the woodworking text is \$47.10.

Mr. DeMaio questioned whether texts have on-line components. Ms. McPadden said that they do have this feature.

Dr. Brady noted that the Secretary of Education wants to see texts eliminated by 2015.

Motion to approve new textbooks (Ms. Gedansky, 2d Ms. Crocco).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

4. Discussion and Possible Action to Recommend Budget for Digital Lab

Dr. Brady noted that film photography currently accounts for a small niche market and the course offerings in this area do not make sense. Amity has two darkrooms. The chemical dark room could be changed to benefit more students at the High School. A digital media space is being proposed.

Mr. Furst said that the space can be used to benefit all disciplines. The language that students are speaking is digital. Mr. Furst cited examples of elementary school students learning more advanced concepts through the use of computers. He noted that students will need to know how to use digital resources and share information. This is what they will be doing in college and in the workplace.

Mr. Flinn said that the District had been ahead of the curve, but is falling behind because we haven't invested in this area. Other schools are now pulling ahead. The first digital art course was introduced this year.

Mr. Furst pointed out that page 7 of the report distributed tonight talks about the cost of converting this space. Mr. Hurley said that that this is a \$47,400 project. Dr. Brady noted that only one dark room would be converted.

Ms. Altman said that students circulated a petition to keep the dark room and their concerns can't be ignored.

Mr. Furst said that the High School could offer digital photography and include a unit on the dark room. He pointed out that most high schools don't have a dark room.

Mr. Browe questioned whether the older methods of film developing offer value that isn't available with modern technology. He questioned whether digital photography can offer the same resolution.

Mr. Flinn said that the distinctions are non-existent now.

Dr. Brady said that the idea of offering a unit on the dark room seemed to offer a good compromise. Once students learn basic techniques, they all gravitate towards digital work.

Motion to recommend budget for digital lab (Mr. DeMaio, 2d Mr. Hurley).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

5. Discussion and Possible Action to Recommend Technology Budget Requests

Dr. Brady said that he would like to offer an overview of the preliminary budget. With budget increases averaging at just over 1%, there have been needs that haven't been addressed. Much has been done to save money and millions have

been saved, but in the next budget year surpluses aren't projected and there is a reduction in special education grants. More changes are expected.

In the area of sports, Dr. Brady noted that the District is facing a dilemma. A complaint was filed in the past because Amity offers ice hockey for boys and not girls. Since there weren't enough girls interested in playing ice hockey, Amity was able to join a cooperative agreement. Now, however, there are 21 girls at Amity interested in playing ice hockey. The \$55,543 cost is mostly for ice rental.

Another expense noted by Dr. Brady is for a STEM Director, a 10-month position that would be useful for teacher evaluations. The cost is listed at \$13,884. Dr. Brady noted that he has also added a Software Implementation Specialist as a program enhancement district-wide. The non-certified 12-month position would have a salary of \$49,062.

The administration would also like to add a 0.2 FTE Spanish teacher and 0.2 FTE French teacher, allowing the High School to keep pace with the added demand for world language courses created by the new two-year world language graduation requirement and the flexibility afforded by the school's 8-period schedule.

Under technology, the budget for 2013-2014 includes \$185,000 for replacement technology equipment. Mr. Hurley asked how old the laptops are that the District is looking to replace. Mr. Palmieri said that they are about six years old; everything on the list is at least five years old.

In the area of technology, Mr. Hurley said that he is interested in the EMC Storage System for server virtualization. At a cost of \$120,498, this would eliminate replacing 3 servers every two years. The District currently has 15 servers. This can be consolidated into two physical boxes. Virtualization would require less management; it can provide better performance, higher availability, and all servers can be physically located in one small rack. Mr. Hurley said that he sees long term savings potential in this expenditure. He said that this is the way to go.

Dr. Brady said that he can bring this to the attention of the full Board. Mr. DeMaio said that he feels the Graduate Study on page 8 should be included in the budget.

Dr. Britton said that he feels that the study would be useful.

Mr. Hurley said that the study would answer questions about the effectiveness of the high school curriculum.

Ms. Altman said that at a cost of \$15,000 for the study, she would prefer to use that money for a lobbyist in Hartford.

Mr. Browe said that this could be left for a discussion with the full Board.

Dr. Brady agreed.

It was noted that 29 iMacs, at a cost of \$43,471, were cut from the budget because they would not work well in the PC environment. A new pilot program was requested by the High School science department, but the cost for 40 iPads and covers was believed to be too much at this time. Dr. Brady noted that the District has enough pilots right now.

Mr. Palmieri said that a ClearPass Mobile Device Management System is needed to manage mobile devices on the wireless infrastructure. With about 1,000 mobile devices attaching to the network, ClearPass would provide security and device management. It can detect audiovisual software, OS version and patch update status of each mobile device.

Mr. Hurley questioned whether this was the only system available to do this. Mr. Palmieri said that it isn't, but this system would work best with Amity's system.

*Motion to approve the technology budget (Mr. Crocco, 2d Mr. Browe).
Vote in favor unanimous.*

Motion passed.

6. Information on Student Information Systems

Dr. Brady said that the District would like to implement a new Student Information System to replace iPass. PowerSchool has been chosen as the replacement. Dr. Brady noted that 108 districts use PowerSchool. The system can be implemented when the District is ready. The price is \$68,000. The annual cost of PowerSchool is \$20,000. Dr. Brady noted that a special meeting would be needed to move ahead with this.

Dr. Dellinger said that what is nice about PowerSchool is that alerts can be set up for grades. The towns of Bethany and Woodbridge already use PowerSchool and Orange will be using the system as well.

Mr. Levine pointed out that the \$20,000 would be billed for the second year after the system is installed. The cost is \$6.00 per student. Dr. Brady noted that the strength in PowerSchool is the training.

Ms. McPadden said that PowerSchool had just been implemented in Easton/Redding when she left that district. PowerSchool is overwhelmingly accepted, in part, because the training is very good and isn't difficult.

Mr. DeMaio questioned what the cost would be if this change isn't completed according to the timetable presented tonight.

Mr. Levine said that the cost would jump to \$80,000. Now would be the best time to proceed in terms of cost.

Mr. DeMaio said that it would make sense to move now.

Dr. Brady said that he might be able to add this topic to the agenda of next week's Facilities Committee meeting.

Mr. Hurley questioned what the impact would be if the entire \$68,000 was paid now, instead of breaking up the payments. He would like to keep this out of next year's budget. He asked if the cost could be further reduced.

Mr. Levine said that he could ask the question.

Dr. Brady noted that this would be a five-year deal. He asked if this could be delayed until January.

Mr. Levine said that the company was clear that a contract needed to be signed. A Board vote will be needed. The contract must be signed by December 21, 2012.

7. Information on Unfunded Mandates

Dr. Brady noted that page 2 of the report shows underfunded or unfunded mandates. There are new standards that teachers will be tested on.

The District will have 710 observations next year. There will be three formal evaluations per teacher and two walkthrough evaluations. Dr. Brady noted that this is the new mandate. The union is preparing a recommendation and department chairs are interested in helping out with evaluations. The Amity Education Association is coming up with a proposal.

Mr. Hurley said that it will be important for the public to know if there is something that the District is required to do.

8. Public Comment

There were no comments from members of the public.

9. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 p.m. (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. DeMaio).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed; meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Lippard, recording clerk