



Board of School Directors Committee Meeting Minutes Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Generated by Renai Cardillo on Tuesday, December 15, 2020

Members present: Courtney Barbieri, Nick Braccio, Janet Flisak, Ken Keith, Stephen Nelson, and Donna Scheuren

Members absent: Bill Brong, Matt Holliday

Others present: Henry Franz, Frank Gallagher, Christopher Hey, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Brian Pawling and Megan Zweiback

1. Education-Personnel Committee

1.1 Curriculum Update

Mrs. Barbieri called the Education-Personnel meeting to order at 6:40 P.M.

Director of Curriculum Dr. Kennedy-Reilly announced the Curriculum Update which includes information on two new high school courses; Rock Band and Chinese I.

High School music teacher Mr. Adam Tucker was in attendance virtually, and spoke about the individual units of study for the Rock Band course which include origins and evolution of rock music, aural elements, production mechanics, the music industry and components of performance. Mr. Tucker spoke in detail of the course and its design to connect to students who possess musical talent and those who may not be able to read music. Mr. Tucker elaborated that while the band is at the core of the course, the students are also learning about acoustics, and analyzing sound in different spaces within the school. Students will also learn how to set up and prepare for a performance, create a set list, instrument preparation and practice and rehearsal.

In addition, Mr. Tucker spoke about the management and business aspect of the course where students learn about marketing, publicity and copyright law. He also indicated that there is a plan to create a partnership program with Montgomery County Community College.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that Rock Band is the outgrowth of a school club and noted with the support of administration and the Board we were able to bring it to fruition as a credited course of instruction.

Mrs. Barbieri praised the course continuation and the outlet it offers for students. Mrs. Barbieri noted appreciation for Mr. Tucker's obvious enthusiasm for the course.

Dr. Gallagher noted that this type of course encourages student attendance simply on its content. Mrs. Scheuren commented on the history and longevity of the music that the students are being taught. Mr. Kwiatkowski commented on the depth of the course, praising Mr. Tucker.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly expressed satisfaction with the implementation and follow through of this particular course during such a challenging time, where public performance and gathering have been severely limited.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly introduced High School teacher Xia Pomposi, who spoke to the Committee and the Board about the new Chinese I course. Ms. Pomposi shared a presentation showing the Chinese characters (in the language) and how the recognition of the characters support the understanding of the language as well as the culture of the country and its many populations.

Ms. Pomposi shared an outline of the course units, expressing her integrative approach to teaching. The teaching of the Chinese culture will support the goal of communication. Ms. Pomposi shared slides of various student projects and supplemental learning tools that are being utilized in the course.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly added that Ms. Pomposi is reaching across other high school courses of study to add layers of depth to the course.

Mr. Kwaitkwoski noted the innovation of the class and Dr. Gallagher acknowledged that Ms. Pomposi has been a nice addition to the high school faculty.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly highlighted the curriculum update focusing on Kindergarten and First Grade ELA Curriculum. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly shared a slide which depicted a timeline of curriculum implementation over a five-year period.

Supervisor of Curriculum, Mrs. Wilkocz reviewed the Kindergarten Year at a Glance and explained the individual Reading and Writing Units. Mrs. Wilkocz stated that kindergarten students receive 30 minutes per day of Phonics instruction through a program titled Foundations. This program focuses on beginning reading skills, vocabulary development, fluency, comprehension and writing skills and conventions.

Mrs. Wilkocz also highlighted the specifics within the first grade units, noting the focused instruction on phonics. Mrs. Wilkocz mentioned *Word Detectives*, a program that the students seem to particularly enjoy as they build on their reading and comprehension strategies.

Mrs. Wilkocz also spoke on the professional development that continues to occur, which equips and supports teacher instruction. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly commented that despite the current challenges, teachers across the district have come together to support each other.

Mrs. Barbieri praised the steadfastness and commitment to uphold and teach curriculum in these challenging times. Mr. Kwaitkowski praised the information that was presented as well as the ability to keep the students at the center of the curriculum. Dr. Gallagher praised Mrs. Wilkocz for her work and commenting on his witness of small moments learning in the elementary classroom.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly concluded the update commenting on the challenges and hurdles that have been encountered in this school year. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted the continual balance of offering superior technology for students and staff while ensuring their safety and privacy. She spoke about the rigorous vetting process for applications; assuring app functionality as well as safety and security for students use.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly shared a live example of a student log in screen, showing the applications (apps) in their environment. Several apps which are key to student functionality include use of Schoology, Microsoft Teams, and ClassLink, all allowing for a synchronous experience. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also reviewed the Tech Hub resources on the website. This is a one-stop for frequently asked questions and tech support inquiries.

Mrs. Barbieri commented on how far and how much progress the district has experienced in such a short amount of time.

1.2 Approve the Proposed 2021-2022 School Year Calendar

Dr. Hey distributed the proposed 2021-2022 school year calendar.

Dr. Gallagher noted the change of the Friday before Labor Day from a non-instructional day to a day of instruction. This decision was made because of the Rosh Hashanah holiday falling on the Tuesday following the Labor Day Monday holiday. Thus, a four-day weekend will still occur. Dr. Hey commented that the calendar still reflects 177 days of instruction plus three Act 80 days. He also noted the approval of Flexible Instruction Days (FID) which may be implemented, in the event of inclement weather.

The Committee agreed to move the proposed calendar forward for Board Action and approval.

Mrs. Barbieri adjourned the Education-Personnel Meeting at 7:31 P.M.

2. Technology Committee

2.1 Updates on New Technology Systems, WAN Infrastructure Projects and HS Devices

Mr. Braccio called the Technology Committee meeting to order at 7:39 PM

Director of Curriculum Dr. Kennedy-Reilly gave a brief overview of district technology and its direct overlap to the Curriculum Department. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted the dependency on technology to support and deliver instruction in various formats throughout the school day and the school year. A slide presentation highlighted the systems, programs and applications, devices, connectivity and app vetting that comprise the district Technology Support & Learning HUB.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly spoke in detail about internet access, privacy, safety and the managing and filtering of hot spots.

An explanation of the Student Help Desk and how it functions was also discussed.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly presented a slide that gave a timeline of the WAN (Wide Area Network) Infrastructure Project. She reminded that this project had been approved by the Board in early 2020 and has been under construction for several months. An update on the work of the contractor Velocity Fiber was given, including conduit occupancy and permits associated with the project. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also mentioned that discussion is underway with Velocity to create Pathway opportunities for our students to view and learn from the upgrade project.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly spoke on the replacement program of the 1:1 devices currently scheduled to purchase for three grade levels, annually. This evening Dr. Kennedy-Reilly requested to accelerate the schedule to purchase 1,000 devices for distribution in the second semester of the current school year. These devices would be distributed to the current 11th and 12th grade and would subsequently reduce the device need for the 2021-2022 school year. The estimated cost of devices is \$652,000.

Mr. Braccio and Mr. Nelson each asked about the timing of the purchase and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly explained that the current devices can no longer support the programs and applications necessary for student learning.

Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Pawling stated that the 2021-2022 budget would be reduced in order to accelerate the purchase in the current budget year.

Mrs. Scheuren asked about the per-unit cost of new devices and if the current machines have any residual value? Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that the machines have reached their end of life and there was a recycling value of approximately \$6.00-\$8.00 per device. Dr. Gallagher also noted that the existing devices (*Winbooks*) are simply not suitable for the current demands of use. He also mentioned that there is a some discussion of a federal stimulus package that may include funding for educational technology.

Mrs. Scheuren asked about the timeline for the purchase and Mr. Pawling indicated that from a procedural standpoint, an approval this evening would allow movement to begin making purchases now and take advantage of the supply chain. Mr. Pawling noted that ratification could occur at next week's Board action meeting.

Mr. Keith stated that this is a very good step forward in the life cycle management of devices, noting the need is core to curriculum development and implementation.

Mrs. Flisak inquired about the metrics of Help Desk which very well may reflect the actual indicator (and need) for device replacement. Mrs. Flisak also asked for specific Help Desk tickets and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly responded that those could be provided at future meetings.

It was agreed by the Committee to move forward for purchase and ratify at the December 17, 2020 Board meeting.

Dr. Gallagher gave an update on the return to in-person instruction. He said that the continuation of safety protocols and contract tracing, he believes that in-person instruction can continue through to the holiday break. He also noted that a partnership between Montgomery County Department of Public Health and CHOP will provide antigen tests to our schools for testing of staff, at the beginning of the new year.

Mrs. Scheuren asked about the meetings with CHOP and Montgomery County. Dr. Gallagher said it is a twice weekly meeting, keeping the Superintendents aware of County efforts and tracing.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly acknowledged the accelerators this year and thanked the Board, and parents for their support. She also thanked teachers for navigating and instructing in such a challenging environment.

Mr. Braccio adjourned the Technology Committee meeting at 8:17 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Brian R. Pawling
Board Secretary / Director of Business Affairs