

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING  
Minutes of Feb. 14, 2013

PRESENT: Larry Breech, Cheryl Kessler, Susan Myers, Frank Suchwala, Kathee Stark  
GUEST: Warren Faust

The meeting began at 6:30 pm. with a discussion of the 1:1 computing initiatives and the possibility of moving to iPads, as well as extending the initiative to other grades. Warren reported on a visit to the Montgomery Area School District. He indicated that they wished to increase student engagement. By doing so, they felt that test scores would increase, but that was not the primary reason for doing so. Training would be required for the teachers. They would be provided with training on the basic use of the iPads, but they would also receive extensive subject-specific training by former teachers. He recommends that the implementation occur in grades 7 – 12, since most of the secondary faculty teach across grade levels. If the limit is grades 9 – 12, most classrooms would still need laptops.

When asked, Warren indicated that many of the original CFF computers will need to be upgraded if we are going to continue to use them for another year or two. Some of the newer ones can be used to upgrade carts at the elementary level, and some will continue to be used for those utilizing the online courses more than half the day from home. If any remain, they can be sold.

The committee discussed the possibility of allowing students to bring their own device (BYOD). Concerns about the time taken to upload software across a variety of devices could be reduced by limiting the devices which are permitted to be brought to school, as well as the use of students such as the Apple Corps at Upper Adams School District.

There are substantial numbers of requests for new textbooks. Kathee indicated that PDE is scheduled to release a K-12 curriculum for language arts, mathematics, and science by June 30 of this year. It was agreed that any purchases should be delayed until these curricula can be reviewed. If the 1:1 initiative is expanded, all secondary requests for books should be able to be met either by free books, such as flexbooks, teacher-created books, or some online books of minimal cost.

At the elementary level, experts in the field have recommended that we not purchase a new reading program. Rather, we should consider an intensive remediation program or supplemental books, many of which could be free online purchases/downloads at the upper elementary levels. Elementary science books had been an issue earlier, but the purchase of smaller, topic-specific booklets may be preferred. The math series may need to be replaced as Common Core requires a shift of at least a year.

Kathee reviewed timelines and expectations for tutoring for Keystone exams. The initial set of results for juniors (generally) will be released March 4. The results for those presently enrolled in the courses will be released July 8. This could be problematic as tutoring will have to be scheduled during the school day for students who do not presently know either by name or number. This could have a profound effect on the enrollments for elective courses. Parents will need to be notified of the changes. There are two articles in the newsletter which will be sent throughout the district within the next week or so. It is likely that we will be having a meeting at the beginning of the year for all families in grade 7-9. This will precede Open House and will be the time to pick up schedules.

The committee discussed curriculum and staffing for next year. They affirmed their recommendation that overall credits be increased from 24 to 26, as well as requiring an additional year of mathematics, increasing that requirement to 4 credits. Other subject areas/courses discussed included health, driver education, pre-algebra and algebra sequencing, computers, business, and tech ed.

There was a lengthy discussion of personnel changes for next year at all levels of the school district. The lack of retirements in certain positions will have a direct effect on furloughs for next year. The numbers from Kindergarten registration, which is scheduled for March 5 and 6, will be critical. Preliminary notices of furloughs and demotions need to be sent by about April 1.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm. The next meeting will be Thursday, March 7 at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathee Stark