

EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, May 6, 2024

Begins at 5:30 p.m.

Administration Office
Board Room

Committee Members					Remaining Meeting Dates	
X	Robert Kern - Chairperson	X	Lori Bali	X	Gene Marks	June 3, 2024
X	Gary Fedorcha - Co-Chairperson	X	Todd Breiner	X	Sherri Molitoris	
X	Chad Christman	X	Michele Dotta	X	Scott Pyne	
X	Rhonda Frantz	X	Nichole Fink	X	James Schnyderite	
X	Mathias Green		Bryan Geist	X	Tania Stoker	
X	Gale Husack		David Hauser	X	Michael Strohl	
X	Donna Kulp	X	Eric Hill	X	Tim Weaber	
	Natalie Snyder	X	Matthew Link			
X	Angela Williams	X	Christopher Mann			

Also in attendance: Steve Haas, Allison Chruscial, Shawn Wanamaker

AGENDA

- ELA Program Adoption (Mr. Pyne)
 - East Lycoming visit
 - Committee meeting - May 1
 - Amplify CKLA Adoption Update
 - Mr. Pyne provided a summary of the Review and Decision-Making Process:
 - September 2023: Administrative review initiated based on local data and developments in the "science of reading." Teachers identified key areas that should guide the search for a new ELA program.
 - October 2023: Evaluated programs that met EdReports standards. Initial list included Wonders and three other promising programs: Wit and Wisdom, EL, and Amplify CKLA/ELA.
 - November to December 2023: Teachers engaged with review kits and program presentations and evaluations during PD days using a rubric derived from identified priorities.

- January 2024: Curriculum Committee observed a close tie for second place between EL and Wonders and recognized Amplify CKLA as a clear front runner due to its high evaluations. For this reason, the Committee unanimously decided to focus all energy on learning as much as possible about Amplify to either confirm or challenge these initial impressions.
- Mr. Pyne then shared the outcome from the Amplify CKLA Deep Dive:
 - Meetings with administrators from West Jefferson Hills Cumberland Valley and East Lycoming.
 - Visits to Cumberland Valley SD and East Lycoming School Districts: Observed enthusiastic endorsements of Amplify, significant student performance improvements, and reduced needs for interventions and special education referrals. These visits significantly influenced the positive perception of Amplify.
 - Substitute shortages prevented some committee members from attending site visits, which we are still addressing with one or two by arranging additional opportunities for exposure to Amplify.
- Mr Pyne concluded with details regarding the final meetings and discussions:
 - Extensive discussions in committee meetings, with administrators and educators from other districts, highlighted the transformative impact of Amplify, especially in aligning with the science of reading.
 - The program's comprehensive nature and strong support during implementation were emphasized as critical to its success.
 - While there have still been anxieties and a sense that we wish we had more time to be more certain, ten of the twelve committee members are supportive of moving forward based on what we do know with a commitment to continue to find answers to questions and work together through challenges.
- Questions Raised and Responses:
 - Q: How does the program support students across different learning levels?
 - A: Amplify has shown to effectively support diverse learning needs, reducing the need for interventions and catering to both struggling and advanced students.
 - Q: What are the financial implications of adopting Amplify?
 - A: Detailed discussions on costs, focusing on efficient use of funds and preparing for future expenses. Plans to utilize available funding sources without compromising the district's budget. A quote provided at the beginning of the process puts an estimate at \$278,000, though additional expenses related to intervention, additional grades, or changes in enrollment and staffing could

impact that. Proposed board motion would be designed as a “not to exceed” motion to allow for some flexibility refining these considerations.

- Q: What is the potential impact of the program on middle school grades?
 - A: Although the current focus is on K-6, there is a strong push from some board members to expand the program through middle school to maintain consistency as students progress. A proposal will be put together to address options for this expansion
- Q: Are there sufficient professional development plans in place?
 - A: Commitments to robust professional development to ensure teachers have access to training and support. Have earmarked a substantial investment, signaling PD as a top priority.
- Q: Is the recommendation a result of unanimous agreement?
 - A: No. There were two of the twelve committee members that abstained from responding to the survey, which Mr. Pyne interpreted as a signal of dissent from the majority opinion.
- Q: Are the K-6 teachers who are not members of the steering committee in support of this?
 - A: Mr. Pyne could not guarantee that, as the process didn't conclude with a recommendation based on individual votes from every teacher, but the steering committee's job was to inform the process and help administration filter things through the teacher lens. It was, however, through teacher evaluations during the presentation and sample reviews that we found Amplify as a clear favorite over the other three. The goal of our third phase then became to confirm or challenge the conclusions of those evaluations
- Q: What are the thoughts of the Director of Educational Technology, Curriculum and Instruction and the building administration?
 - While each administrator described their own learning and evolving opinions throughout the process, Mr. Pyne, Mr. Schnyderite and Mr. Breiner each expressed unwavering support for the program, highlighting experiences that informed their opinion. Mr. Pyne noted that it was the rating of the program by our teachers that led to its uncontested consideration this Spring, and the experiences we have had reinforced the collective judgment of those teacher scores.
- Q: How long have we had Wonders, how long is our contract with them, and is it not working?
 - A: We have had Wonders for seven years, and the contract was for six. The principals made it work for an additional year by working through some compromises and negotiation with MCGraw-Hill in order to have time to take a review under consideration. Concerns

about its effectiveness motivated the search. We were not seeing notable results prior to the pandemic, but it is the challenges in recovering from the pandemic that really magnified the concern. Given the changes in our understanding of literacy development, we also recognized that the structure of the Wonders program was not going to be the solution.

■ Recommendation to Adopt:

➤ The overwhelming evidence from site visits, combined with the high evaluations and strong committee and administrative support, led to the recommendation to adopt Amplify CK for grades K-6. The proposal was to bring this recommendation to the school board, highlighting the program's alignment with educational goals and its potential to significantly improve literacy outcomes. The school board urged Mr. Pyne and the administration to expand the proposal to include 7th and 8th grade, which Dr. Link assured them we would do it.

○ Board members on the committee support moving Amplify CKLA Adoption to the May Board Agenda.

● IXL - [Slatington Elementary Quote](#) (Mr. Pyne)

○ Committee Supports moving item to the May Board Agenda

● HS Lunch & Learn Update (Dr. Bali)

○ [Student Expectations](#)

○ [Staff Expectations](#)

● EF Tours Update (Dr. Stoker)

○ 12 teachers responded to survey / held appointments with EF Tours rep

○ International Proposal

2026	2027	2028	2029
Rome & Perugia 7 days	Athens & Argolida 7 days	Japan Backtracking the Golden Route 9 days	Ireland & England 9 days

○ Domestic Proposal

■ 2025 [US National Parks - Grand Canyon, Bryce, Zion](#)

○ Next Steps

■ Communication to families

■ Enrollment session on an evening in May

■ Board members on the committee support moving forward with EF Tours opportunities

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 3, 2024