

## Curriculum Committee Minutes

January 23, 2024

Present: Cindy Luty: Chair, Members: Deborah Grabarek, Dr. Roy Seitsinger, Ray Bernier, Christopher Pickett  
Public: Jill Keith

Approval of the minutes (October 19, 2023)  
Grabarek/Luty

Public member, Jill Keith, congratulated Christopher Pickett on his being chosen as the new principal at the Preston Plains Middle School and expressed her appreciation for his positive impact on students. She stated that she is happy with the work of the town Finance Committee and is also impressed with the work of the Board of Education Finance Committee.

Old Business:

1. Update on the reading program implementation:

Roy and Ray are visiting classes to check on the implementation of the into Reading program. It is going very well both for students and teachers. We are fortunate that we did not have to apply for a waiver from the state as we were in a place of looking for a new reading program at the time. Districts are having a very difficult time getting approved for the waiver and the Commissioner is emphatic about programs designated as acceptable by the state and is done with waiver discussions.

2. Update on NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accreditation.

The progress is getting to more tedious things (e.g. honing in on specific playground needs and changes) and other modifications that satisfy NAEYC standards. The initial work is almost completed and we could possibly have an impromptu visit from one NAEYC person in the near future. Only one class will be looked at to get a feel of the building and what is happening that satisfies requirements and where we are in the process. We should be done with our work by June.

3. Update on math materials selection:

Ray discussed the number of math programs being considered. Amongst them are Illustrative Math, Go Math, and Into Math. There have been some presentations and demonstrations so far with another in the works. They all have particular strengths and weaknesses so we need to find the one that best fits our needs. There is no math program mandate as there is for reading programs.

4. Grade level communication:

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### 4. Grade level communication:

Monthly news letters have been incorporated by individual grade levels that include snippets of what is happening in the classroom. We are considering bringing more small focus presentations to the Board as a whole (e.g. the presentation on submersibles, google classroom, and VR goggles) to keep the BOE broadly informed and reinforce the good work the staff is doing.

#### New Business:

1. The State required new kindergarten age change will take effect as of September 1, 2024. Children will have to attain the age of 5 on or before September first. Parents can, however, request that their child be admitted into kindergarten before they turn five by submitting a waiver to the district. An assessment will be completed to determine whether the child is ready to enter kindergarten before their fifth birthday. This waiver will only be considered for the 2024-2025 school year while the new change is taking place. Some parents may not be aware of the change so the letters going home are important. While the date change is the state requirement, the evaluating tool is left up to the discretion of each district. There will be a May first deadline for waiver submission for planning purposes.

#### 2. Input on Increasing Educator Diversity Plan:

Roy stated that the first diversity plan on March 15, 2024 to the State Board of Education. Modifications can be made until the end of May. The plan is intended to draw BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) into our district and job application process. We have 2% BIPOC certification staff and about 6% BIPOC student population. The State might say that we have a gap. Though statistically mild according to the State, all such discrepancies need to be addressed. We need to attract and develop not just personnel, but people with different experiences and cultures as much as possible to share different perspectives and understanding. We have a team working on a rubric to develop a draft that the whole BOE will look at and make changes if needed.

#### 3. PDEC Teacher Evaluation Rewrite (Professional Development and Evaluation Committee):

Roy noted that a local teacher evaluation system must be rewritten and a vigor reinstated. The State has set up standards, but each district designs its own plan which the State needs to accept. It is due by June 30th of this year. We are sharing resources and idea with other small districts. There is a huge volume of details of what needs to happen. We will be training our people to implement, assess, and tweak. It is a huge job with a tight deadline.

Adjournment: Grabarek/Luty