

Curriculum Committee Meeting

June 13, 2018 8:15 a.m.

Central Office Conference Room

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 8:15 a.m.

Present Committee Members:

Sara Spaulding (Chairperson), Dan McNeill, Ellen Uzenoff (by phone)

Present Administration:

William McKersie, Ph.D., Superintendent; Kenneth Craw, Ed. D., Assistant Superintendent; Laura Kaddis, HES Principal; Pattie Falber, WIS Principal, Dan Doak, WMS Principal; Lisa Deorio, WHS Principal; Mercedes Fernandes, K-12 World Language CIL; Jamie Charles, 6-12 Science and Technology CIL; Christine Cincotta, 6-12 ELA CIL; Elizabeth Morris, K-12 Performing Arts CIL; Carolyn Vinton, K-5 Math and Science CIL

Members of the Public:

Gina Albert

2. Presentation of proposed textbook adoptions

Discussion:

- WMS French
 - Mrs. Fernandes presented the proposal for new French textbooks for grades 6, 7, and 8.
 - Units from both the Nouveau Pixel 1 (French grade 6) and Nouveau Pixel 2 (French grades 7 and 8) texts were piloted by the middle school teachers. There were two other textbooks that were reviewed as well.
 - Teachers found that the Nouveau Pixel texts align well with the high school texts and teaching approach. The units focus on cultural and authentic communicative tasks that embed the necessary vocabulary and grammar.
 - These recommended texts are an excellent resource to supplement the curricular units.
- WMS Science
 - Mrs. Charles presented the proposal for new middle school science e-textbooks.
 - There are two online middle school resources that have been piloted this year: (1) NSTA e-books and (2) Amplify online curriculum. Based on the initial pilot, teachers have recommended that we pilot Amplify for one more year.
 - The NSTA e-texts align well with the updated NGSS-aligned curriculum for Weston. They will be used with several middle school units of study. The NSTA e-texts also align well with the on-to-one digital access and provide multi-dimensional, inquiry-based learning opportunities.
 - Committee members inquired about the Amplify texts. Mrs. Charles explained that Amplify program is different than the NSTA e-texts, as it provides materials for every aspect of the curriculum. Teachers would like one more year to pilot the program as they found that some of the piloted units were better than others.

- AP Environmental Science
 - Mrs. Charles also presented the proposal for AP Environmental Science textbooks.
 - Because the coming school year will be the first to have an AP offering, no textbook was piloted.
 - Mrs. Charles and her team researched texts that local districts use as well as texts her teachers found on their own.
 - The recommended text, *Environment: The Science Behind the Stories* is grounded in real-world phenomena, highlighting relevant and current topics and data points. It aligns well with the required AP topics and level of rigor.
 - There is an electronic component as well as the hard text. The online version has many extensions (i.e., tasks, videos) beyond the written text.

3. Update on WHS Center for Academic Support and Enhancement (CASE) and Writing Center

Discussion:

- CASE
 - For the coming school year, the same amount of FTE will be in place.
 - WHS is bringing a focus on math to CASE. SPED teachers will still be assigned for more global support.
 - The goal is to keep the CASE center open the entire day with a greater emphasis on math.
- Writing Center
 - This was the first year that the Writing Center was in the same room as CASE.
 - This move to be closer to classrooms and teachers made a significant difference in terms of student utilization and visits to classrooms by the Writing Center Teachers.
 - The biggest challenge in the Writing Center is trying to accommodate everyone who wants an appointment, especially at peak times.
 - Next year, there will be a third teacher in the Writing Center (no change in FTE).

4. Review of Tri-State report on Writing Across the Disciplines

Discussion:

- Tri-State's visiting team commended the district on how well our students write with volume and stamina, as well for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- The K-12 Writing Committee met to discuss the report and focus on systemic issues to address.
 - What does exemplary writing look like in Weston?
 - Parent communication. Namely, help parents understand the District stance on mechanics.
 - The Committee has some ideas on how to address this, such as sending home examples of what good writing looks like, and an informational rubric.

5. Information on WHS Music Department field trip to participate in Festival Disney

Discussion:

- WHS Music Department is planning a trip to participate in Festival Disney, February 28 through March 4 (two days of school will be missed).
- The trip will be open to most of the ensembles at WHS and will serve as an opportunity to build a sense of community between them.
- This trip has unique opportunities for students such as recording in a professional sound studio and working with Disney master conductors.
- Seven staff members will be chaperones; parent chaperones will be added if needed.
- The cost is approximately \$1,400 per student.

6. Information on WMS and WHS art enrollment

Discussion:

- Earlier in the year, the Board approved WHS Art Department requests to adjust some course requirements as well as course names in order to help improve art enrollment, but despite these efforts, art enrollments are down. As a result, the high school is down .3 FTE in art instruction and one art teacher will be teaching a course at the middle school.
- The revisions in the WMS master schedule beginning this coming year will allow the opportunity for all students to take art. Further, art enrichment will be offered in the new extension block in the middle school schedule.
- The administration is concerned and wants to continue to address the downward trend in art enrollment.

7. Discussion of planned implementation of K-5 science program

Discussion:

- Mrs. Vinton presented the update on the implementation of K-5 Next Generation Science Standards.
- This past year, two classes in grades K-2 and 5 piloted all Amplify NGSS units. The pilot teachers then facilitated professional development workshops to bring the rest of the team up to speed.
- For grades K and 1, there are three major units of study containing 22 lessons from the Amplify curriculum. Grade K will have two 30-minute science periods per week; and grade 1 will have three 40-minute lessons per week on average.
- Grade 2 has three major units of study containing 22 lessons. Grade 2 will have three 40-minute lessons per week.
- Grade 5 will consist of five major units. Each of the five units has 22 lessons. Grade 5 science will be taught daily within a two hour math/science block.
- These Amplify units will prepare our students for the NGSS assessment.

8. Information regarding WIS 5th grade teaming model

Discussion:

- WIS has redesigned the schedule for the fifth grade beginning with the 2018-19 school year.
- There will be two-teacher teams. One teacher will teach a 2-hour math/science block, while their teammate will teach a 2-hour reading/writing block and then switch.
- Each teacher will teach social studies to their own class.
- This scheduling concept allows for more equitable planning time per subject while decreasing the number of teacher preps per week.
- This scheduling change also allows for flexibility within the teaching block and integration of other subject content (i.e., math and computational thinking integrated into science lessons).

9. Discussion of updates to WIS enrichment programming

Discussion:

- In follow up to the Project Challenge report last year, WIS administration has had several discussions on enrichment for grades 3-5.
- WIS will continue to provide math enrichment in grades 3-5, but will provide push-in classroom visits so that more students may benefit.
- Project Challenge teacher, Rudd Anderson, will provide the math enrichment and will be in the classrooms 22-24 weeks, instead of the current 16 weeks for a select group.
- The administration feels this model will be effective in reducing the number of student pull-outs from class.

10. Approval of April and May minutes

Motion Passed: April and May Curriculum Committee minutes were approved with a motion by Ellen Uzenoff and a second by Dan McNeill.

3 Yeas - 0 Nays.

11. Other curricular issues

Discussion:

No other items were put forth for discussion. Meeting was adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

June Curiano

Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent