



# EDUCATION/TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

January 16, 2025

Virtual Meeting - 8:30 A.M.

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Committee Members: Beth Fiore, Chair

Ellen DePinto, Paulo Lopes, Carolyn Podgorski

Administrative Staff: Dr. Jonathan Hart, Superintendent of Schools

Staci Beegle, Director of Pupil Services

Jason Bohm, SBA/Board Secretary

Dr. Stacey Brown, Humanities Supervisor

Sherry Krial, PD/Tech Supervisor

Sarah Pauch, Math, Science, Tech Supervisor

Anthony Tumolo, SEL Supervisor

Jim Belske, Technology Coordinator

## Agenda

1. Welcome Ellen!

2. Reminder of Board Goals

Dr. Hart briefly mentioned that Academic Achievement and Safety are the two Board Goals that continue to be prioritized in Ed/Tech. The committee will receive periodic updates on the progress of these goals. It was also mentioned that the district is seeing an increase in chronic absenteeism in some populations, which would fall under the Academic Achievement goal, this is something the committee will monitor and discuss in future meetings.

3. Prevention Resources Grade 1 Lesson - Mr. Tumolo proposed adding one 40 minute lesson for the first grade SEL program for March of this school year which would be taught by educators from Hunterdon Prevention Resources, Inc. Counselors and teachers approached Mr. Tumolo with the need to teach first graders about acceptance and diversity. Kindergarten has the Kelso's Choice program, second grade has Aevium, and third grade has the CAP program. There is no cost for this program.

4. Curriculum Initiatives and Budget Priorities 2025-2026

- a. SEL: Pilot *Robin* Program 6-8 (tentative) - Mr. Tumolo is looking into a pilot for *Robin* for grades 6-8 in 2025-2026. Robin is an individualized SEL program that supports student mental health and social-emotional development by connecting students with lessons tailored to their specific needs.
- b. Humanities: Handwriting grades K, 1, 3 and Library/Media K-8 - Dr. Brown reported on the 4 different handwriting pilots that are taking place this year in grades K, 1, and 3. The district is participating in a Penn State study on these different handwriting programs and researchers will be sharing those results with the district to help in selecting the best program to purchase. Dr. Brown also discussed a transition to new Library/Media software district-wide called MackinVision for 2025-2026. This program has the ability to track more than just library

materials, it could also track sports uniforms, instruments, devices, and any other loaned items. MackinVision has better student usability than Destiny, which the software the district is currently using, it connects with Genesis, and it is cheaper to purchase. In terms of parent notification for library materials, MackinVision does not have a way to search for potentially sensitive topics or to email parents when a student checks out a book, but as Dr. Brown was researching the different software options, she noted that none of the software were able to do that. Parents will have the ability (as they do now) to log into their child's account to see what books they've taken out of the library. There is no change to what parents currently do now, which is to contact the Media Specialist to limit the kinds of materials their child is able to access. Once the new software is implemented, a Genesis blast will be sent to parents with instructions on how to login and reminders about library protocols.

- c. Math, Sci, Health: Science 4-5, Math 6-8, Health textbook 6-8 - Ms. Pauch reported that Amplify Science has been fully implemented in grades 6-8 this year. Amplify Science is now being piloted in grades 4-5 this year, and since teachers are reporting very good results and the last update to textbooks was over 10 years ago, this is included in the budget for 2025-2026. For Math, Ms. Pauch mentioned that the pilot for EdGems grades 6-8 is also going very well. Teachers have reported that although the Standards and content are the same from previous years, the way that EdGems presents the information is a huge improvement over Big Ideas, which is the program the district currently uses. For Health, Ms. Pauch recommends purchasing Teen Health for Grades 6-8. This is the program the district used prior to The Great Body Shop. Teen Health's lessons are better suited to the new middle school schedule. There are no changes in content. The sexual health units are available to purchase separately, but the district will decline those and continue to use the teacher created materials aligned to the Standards.
  - d. Special Ed: Dyslexia screener and implementation protocols - Ms. Beegle reported on the protocols for dyslexia screening. IReady diagnostics are administered three times a year and are the universal screener that the district uses for general education students. IReady is recognized by the State as a first tier screener to identify students who then need a more in depth one-on-one screener. The district then uses several one-on-one screeners based on the students' needs but will be investing in a new dyslexia-specific paper-pencil screener for next year. Teachers have been reviewing the new State Dyslexia Handbook and distilling that information down to share with colleagues. K-3 teachers attend an annual webinar on dyslexia screening and teaching strategies.
- 5. ESY Program Dates - Ms. Beegle announced the ESY Program dates this year will be Jul 1 -31 for the self-contained programs and Jul 1 - 24 for the supplemental reading program.
  - 6. Strategic Plan Summary Timeline- Dr. Hart reported that since the district's 5 year strategic plan is complete, he will begin collecting data through surveys from parents, staff, and students through focus and parent groups. He plans to bring survey results to the Board in March/April with recommendations for budget items for strategic planning going forward.
  - 7. Board Committee Handbook - This has been reviewed in every committee now.
  - 8. Summer Enrichment - Mrs. Krial updated the committee on Summer Enrichment offerings for grades K-6. Ms. Ogden will be the coordinator. The classes will change week to week so students could attend several weekends without overlapping content. New this year is a 30 min early dropoff, which was suggested by parents last summer. The course offerings will be sent out after board approval.

Agenda items: ESY Program approval, staff tuition contract, donation, home instruction, other typical items

Next Meeting: Feb 21 @ 8:30.