



EDUCATION/TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 29, 2024

Virtual Meeting - 8:30 A.M.

Committee Members: Beth Fiore, Chair

Randall Peach, Carolyn Podgorski, Jennifer Wolf (alt.)

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

Guest:

Bobbie Bolandi, Behavioral Health Counselor (agenda item #1)

MINUTES

1. Mental Health Program at RMS

- a. Tiered Mental Health Services - Mr. Tumolo and Ms. Bolandi, the Behavioral Health Counselor, gave an update on the District's Mental Health Program for students. The program, which is in its 3rd year, is funded through a Federal ESSER grant. The grant expires at the end of this school year however because of its success, the district has built the cost to continue it into the 2024-2025 budget. The district has designed a 3 tiered system of mental support services. 80% of students are in Tier I which provides strategies for students through universal SEL instruction. Tier II represents about 10-15% of the student population. These services include short term services provided by Guidance Counselors. Tier III, facilitated by Ms. Bolandi, includes about 3-5% of the student population, these students require the most services to help get them through the school day, or in some cases to get them to school in the first place. Ms. Bolandi reported that she is helping students address anxiety, depression, self regulation, peer relationship issues, and suicidal ideation. Ms. Bolandi works for the district 32 hours a week M-Th. She sees students in Grades 5-8. Students are referred to her through the School Counselors. Parental permission is required to receive services and parents are continually involved in the services that their student receives. Success of this program is measured with pre and post assessments based on things like attendance, overall mood, parent feedback, and discipline referrals. These indicators vary by student. In addition to services for students, Ms. Bolandi also facilitates staff education through staff facility meetings as well as classroom strategies for individual students.

2. Curriculum Department Tentative Budget Priorities

- a. Purchase of new and revised curricular materials: Dr. Brown recommended the purchase of several new curricular materials for her department. The Reading Program K-2 was introduced in last month's meeting, but Dr. Brown touched briefly on it to answer any questions. Next the

committee discussed new Spanish textbooks entitled: Auténtico Spanish Textbook from Savvas Learning Company Grades 6-8. She also recommended replacing Mandarin textbooks with Easy Steps to Chinese Textbook 2nd Edition Vol. 1 and 2 by Beijing Language and Culture University Press, Grades 6-8. French textbooks were replaced a couple of years ago, so now all of the World Language textbooks will be current editions.

Ms. Pauch discussed new and revised materials for her department. She recommended Amplify Science as the new supplemental materials for Grades 6-8 as well as a pilot for Amplify Science in the 2024-2025 budget for Grades 4 and 5. The Grade 6-8 classrooms who are piloting the Amplify Science now report positive feedback with the lessons and materials. The material is aligned to the state Science assessment and includes areas of study that were lacking in the district's previous Science textbooks. Ms. Pauch also recommended purchasing the revised Math Ready Classroom 2024 for Grades K-5. This updated version addresses areas that needed improvement such as more reading level friendly word problems and hands on center-based activities. Ms. Pauch reported that she also reviewed the latest version of Big Ideas 2019 copyright which are the math resources for Grades 6-8. Big Ideas, which is used at Hunterdon Central, is closely aligned with the 2016 NJSL Standards and also covers the major changes to the 2020 NJSL Standards for Math. This will be revisited if and when a new edition of Big Ideas comes out. The 6-8 Math department is also reviewing another textbook for potential pilot and adoption.

- b. Reflect an increase in stipend payments for curriculum writing consistent with RTEA contract - Mrs. Krial reported that stipend payments to teachers went up by \$5/hour according to the new RTEA contract for things like teacher academies, curriculum writing, and summer enrichment.
3. Mid-Year Diagnostics - Dr. Hart, Ms. Pauch, and Dr. Brown presented a mid-year diagnostic report on student achievement. This was requested by Committee Members at the last meeting. In the past, these reports were not readily available, but now LinkIt is able to pull and share data so districts can compare their results to county and statewide averages. This report will be shared with Board Members at the March meeting.
4. Parent Academy: Night of Discovery March 20, 2024 - Mrs. Krial updated the Committee on the Parent Academy: Night of Discovery March 20, 2024 from 6-8pm at Holland Brook School. This evening is open to all Readington Parents to learn about the many wonderful happenings and resources in the District. Registration is now open. There are 23 sessions currently planned led by staff, administrators, and community partners. Topics include introduction to the schools and the new preschool program, academic and support services available to students, and many, many more. There will be student presenters, keynote speakers, as well representatives from Township Committee, Readington Teachers Education Association, H.S.A., Board of Education, Readington Police Department, YMCA, Prevention Resources, Starfish, and many others. Registration and the course descriptions will be posted on Genesis.
5. Teacher Academy Catalog - Mrs. Krial presented the Spring Teacher Academy Catalog and reported that after course descriptions were shared with neighboring districts, 4 participants from out of district have asked to participate.

The March 15 In-Service - Staff facilitators will be on the March BOE agenda. Mrs. Krial shared the draft In-Service agenda. This day of Professional Development for teachers and staff will also include special features like food trucks and bakery treats to make it a nice day for everyone.

6. Preschool Registration Update - 147 students were registered for preschool during preschool registration drive last week. More registrations are continuing to come in. It is anticipated that the program will be at capacity for the 2024-2025 school year.

Agenda items: March In-Service Facilitators, Mid-Year Diagnostic

Next Meeting: April 19 at 8:30am

Summaries of Curriculum Revisions