

**MARPLE NEWTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, October 8, 2009
GAUNTLETT CENTER BOARD ROOM**

PRESENT: Committee: Mrs. Nancy Galbraith, Mrs. Dana Kauffman,
Dr. Jeffrey Shapiro

Administration: Dr. Merle Horowitz, Dr. Constance Bompadre,
Dr. Toni Himes, Mr. Chris Lee

Press: 0

Audience: 6

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Galbraith called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Galbraith led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of Minutes of September 10, 2009

The minutes were approved by the committee.

4. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved by the committee.

5. Discussion/Informational Items

a. Curriculum Review Cycle

Dr. Bompadre presented to the Board the 7 year Curriculum Review Cycle. She noted that it aligns closely with the Understanding by Design model that the content supervisors use to help write curriculum. She briefly reviewed the main ideas in each year of the cycle. For year 3 and 4, **Teaching for Understanding**, sometimes teachers need an extra year to implement new resources and to find out what worked for teachers and what did not work.

Dr. Bompadre met with content supervisors in September and noted that some areas may need to be tweaked based on the work that was done last year. The Curriculum Review Cycle can help in planning for new textbook adoption and budget. By going from a 5 to 7 year cycle, content can be broken out by level. Dr. Shapiro asked what would happen if the state came and changed the standards. Dr. Bompadre responded by saying that the cycle would have to be tweaked and that supervisors would then meet with teachers to revise standards. The cycle needs to be tweaked each year. Dr. Bompadre said that staff is reminded that the textbook is not the curriculum and that they should not rely too heavily on the textbook.

Dr. Shapiro asked what was the value and purpose of a Curriculum Cycle for a subject area that does not advance too quickly. He mentioned literature books that were read years ago, but are still being read today. Dr. Bompadre said that even though the book may not change, how it is implemented may change. With student needs changing, teachers now have to differentiate their instruction.

Dr. Himes, Supervisor of Language Arts and Reading, told the committee that the department has a new literature series which includes non-fiction, memoir and a variety of shorter works along with the classics.

b. Understanding By Design & Essential Questions

Dr. Bompadre presented to the Board the UbD Curriculum Framework that looks at core assessments and essential questions. Supervisors work with teachers at various levels. Teachers will sometime work over the summer to do curriculum writing. Eventually teachers will meet for face-to-face collaboration.

The Curriculum Cycle is a guide that sometimes needs to be tweaked. Dr. Horowitz said that when the new plan is tweaked, it will be presented to the Board.

c. District Writing Plan

Dr. Himes presented the revised Writing Plan to the Board. She had (2) hard copies for the committee to review. The Writing Plan is on the website under “Publications” and is on each school’s page under “Links.”

Dr. Himes said that the PSSA actually dictates that 3 modes of writing be taught (narrative, informational and persuasive). On the years when the PSSA is not given, the District has an in-house writing prompt. The framework covers grades K-12.

Dr. Himes told the Board that Mrs. Mecouch and Ms. Schaal worked hard on a map of the learning cycle. Dr. Himes said that writing is not just accomplished in English class, but spread across the content areas. Supervisors spoke to content area teachers about informal and formal writing. Quick writes or small writes are encouraged. Students

write for about 2 minutes on what the lesson was about. Writing ideas were provided for all of the subject areas. All secondary content area subjects are also required to do 1 PSSA like writing prompt per quarter. The Glossary and Bibliography have been boosted. Reading Specialists reviewed the revised writing plan with all elementary teachers during staff development at the beginning of the school year.

Dr. Shapiro asked Dr. Himes if the district was ever able to fully staff the number of theme editors that we allowed for the budget. Dr. Himes responded by saying that we do have all of the theme editors. We have 8 total theme editors (4 for the high school and 4 for the middle school). Dr. Himes has theme editors coming in on a consistent day of the week. Dr. Shapiro was pleased and said that the district has come a long way with regards to theme editors.

Mrs. Galbraith mentioned that at Back to School Night, every teacher she saw spoke about writing in the content area.

Mrs. Kauffman was pleased with the Writing Plan.

Dr. Himes said that the theme editors assist in scoring in-house writing prompts. The data gets back to the classroom teacher in a timely fashion.

d. Language Arts Curriculum

Dr. Himes was going to show the committee the actual program (Tech Paths) where the curriculum data is stored. However, due to a rollover, she was unable to access the data. Dr. Himes did report that many maps have already been entered into the program. Dr. Himes was able to tell the committee what the map looked like. Across the top are categories (Essential Questions, Content, Skill, Assessment, Lessons, Resources and Standards). Many of the CORE maps have been entered. The teachers will expand upon the CORE map by entering their own diary maps. This will involve a huge commitment to professional development. Dr. Bompadre said that the district purchased 150 licenses.

The elementary curriculum has been written, but is in a different format. This data will eventually be converted into Tech Paths format. Some of the electives have been entered.

A parent asked about the Writing Plan and how would the district know if the teachers are participating in the plan? Dr. Himes responded by saying that supervisors monitor the teachers and that a rubric is provided for scoring writing.

Another audience member asked about slower learners and how would they be able to participate in writing. Dr. Himes said that it is really up to the individual teacher, but that students could work in groups; study guides that are partially filled-in could be provided to the students along with untimed writing assignments.

A parent asked Dr. Himes how well does Marple Newtown do compared to other school districts. Dr. Himes said that Marple Newtown does very well. There was some discussion regarding PSSA and writing. Dr. Himes told the audience that the state looks at writing as a continuum. The student is being assessed at a sophisticated level. The PSSA is given in grades 5, 8, and 11. The 5th grade writer moves up to a more advanced writer by 11th grade. Dr. Himes said that there are not many advanced writers in 5th and 8th grade.

e. Garden of Discovery

Dr. Bompadre shared some good news with the committee. Worrall School has an initiative to go green this year. Mrs. Linda Peoples applied for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Community Greening Award. Worrall School will be receiving the award in early November. The school will be receiving a plaque.

Comments from the Audience:

A parent in the audience spoke to the committee about the lack of use of Edline at the High School. She said that the use of Edline at Paxon Hollow was excellent and wanted to know why it really wasn't used as much at the High School. Mrs. Kauffman feels Edline is an excellent resource.

Dr. Horowitz and Dr. Shapiro said that there is no contractual requirement to use Edline. Dr. Horowitz encourages all staff to use Edline and will contact Mr. McFall to discuss the use of Edline with the high school faculty. She said that if a teacher does not use Edline it is expressed in a narrative on their evaluation. Dr. Bompadre will speak to Dr. Subers about how he motivates his staff to use Edline.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.