



CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW BRITAIN

New Britain Board of Education Curriculum Subcommittee Meeting

September 16, 2019 – 7:00 PM | New Britain Educational Administration Center

Call to Order and Opening

Dr. Violet Jimenez Sims, Curriculum Subcommittee Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Committee Members Present

Dr. Violet Jimenez Sims; Mr. Nicholas Mercier

CSDNB Staff Present

Ms. Amy Anderson; Ms. Lara Bohlke; Ms. Edie DeSimone; Ms. Karen Falvey; Ms. Sarah Harris; Ms. Kristin Salerni

New Business

Review and approve minutes from the Curriculum Subcommittee meeting on June 17, 2019

There were no recommended changes to the minutes from the Curriculum Subcommittee meeting on June 17, 2019.

Discuss Partnership with Math Solutions

Ms. Sarah Harris, Vance Elementary Principal, and Ms. Karen Falvey, Smith Elementary Principal, provided background on the proposed partnership between Math Solutions and Vance and Smith Elementary Schools. The two elementary schools have teamed up to continue their initiative to improve math instruction. Math Solutions, a division of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH), is dedicated to improving students' learning of mathematics by providing educators with the highest quality professional development services, products, and resources. The services provided by Math Solutions include professional development (one day) and onsite job-embedded coaching (3 days). The professional development session is scheduled for Election Day, November 5, 2019. Ms. Harris and Ms. Falvey believe this program will help the forty participating teachers to instruct more conceptually and decrease the students struggling with number sense which will improve their ability both in the classroom and on standardized testing.

Dr. Jimenez Sims expressed interest in finding out if it would be possible to have the district's Instructional Coaches attend the PD session in order to maximize districtwide impact given the cost of the program. Ms. Bohlke said that she would look into this possibility.

The Curriculum Subcommittee recommended that this request be reviewed at the next Finance Subcommittee Meeting.

Discuss SPIRE Reading Intervention Program

Ms. Edie DeSimone, Coordinator of Special Education and Pupil Services, provided background on the SPIRE (Specialized Program Individualizing Reading Excellence) Reading Intervention Program. SPIRE is an intensive multisensory reading intervention program which she believes will fill the current gap that exists in the continuum of reading support offered throughout the district. The elementary schools presently have LLI which is not designed to meet the needs of students who are not decoding. Wilson instruction is available, but we currently only have one teacher in each building who can deliver this

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instruction and the certification process takes a full year. The SPIRE program is aligned with the format of Wilson lessons, but only requires a ½ day of training and can fill the gaps that exist while awaiting a certified Wilson teacher or for those students whose needs are not as intensive as those who would qualify for Wilson instruction. Ms. DeSimone stated that the program is also cost effective when compared with the potential cost of outplacement. The SPIRE program includes a webinar training session and materials. Ms. DeSimone stated that teachers from the elementary Bridges Programs (Holmes/Chamberlain) and special education teachers from Northend Elementary would receive this training. Presently the Bridges Programs are without an IDA endorsed decoding intervention and this population traditionally has a high level of nonreaders. Northend Elementary School does not currently have a Wilson trained instructor on staff.

The Curriculum Subcommittee recommended that this request be reviewed at the next Finance Subcommittee Meeting.

Discuss the inclusion of LGBTQ+ rights and issues in the general and sexual education curriculum

Upon request of Curriculum Subcommittee members, Ms. Lara Bohlke, Coordinator of Curriculum Grades 6-12, shared information with regard to how LGBTQ+ rights and issues are incorporated into current curriculums in the district. Ms. Bohlke presented information including Health HGD Unit Block Plans (Grades 6-8), the Health and Wellness Program of Study Outline (Grades 9-12), and lesson plans which included topics related to LGBTQ+ rights and issues.

Dr. Jimenez Sims shared that GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) Trainings have been used by other school districts to educate their staff on this topic. The subcommittee recommended continued awareness, especially in regard to curriculum renewal, regarding the examination of our practices around building better staff understanding and acceptance of the diversity of our students. It was further recommended that the Policy Subcommittee consider future review of district policies regarding LGBTQ+ rights and issues to ensure alignment with current state laws.

Closing and Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.

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