



CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW BRITAIN

New Britain Board of Education Curriculum Committee Meeting

May 17, 2021 – 6:15 PM | New Britain High School

Call to Order and Opening

Dr. Violet Jiménez Sims, Curriculum Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:18 PM.

Board Members Present

Mr. Anthony Kane*, Mr. Joseph Listro*, Ms. Diana Reyes*, Ms. Tina Santana#, Dr. Violet Jiménez Sims*

*Committee members
Participated remotely

CSDNB Staff Present

Ms. Amy Anderson, Ms. Lara Bohlke, Ms. Karen Falvey, Ms. Maryellen Manning, Ms. Kristin Salerni, Dr. Nicole Sanders, Ms. Nancy Sarra, Ms. Jennifer Wright

New Business

Review and Approve Minutes from the Curriculum Committee Meeting on April 19, 2021

There were no recommended changes to the minutes from the Curriculum Committee Meeting on April 19, 2021.

Ms. Reyes motioned to approve the minutes from the Curriculum Committee Meeting on April 19, 2021 as submitted, seconded by Mr. Listro. Motion carried unanimously.

Accept Monthly EdAdvance Report

Ms. Lara Bohlke, District Coordinator of Curriculum for Grades 6-12 and Ms. Amy Anderson, District Coordinator of PK-5 Curriculum, shared a link to the Monthly EdAdvance Report with committee members. Committee members reviewed actions, accomplishments, and next steps for the months of March and April.

Mr. Listro motioned to accept the monthly EdAdvance Reports as submitted, seconded by Ms. Reyes. Motion carried unanimously.

Review EdAdvance/CSDNB Curriculum Renewal Project – Professional Learning Resources

Ms. Anderson gave an overview of the website highlighting the professional learning and curricular resources available for our staff and administrators. Website: <https://sites.google.com/csdbnstaff.org/nb-renewal-project/home>

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Ms. Reyes motioned to add acceptance into the ISTE Program as an item on the agenda, seconded by Mr. Listro. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Jennifer Wright, Assistant Coordinator of STEAM and Summer Programming, spoke to committee members about the district's acceptance into the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Program which will assist our staff as we continue to bring technology integration to the forefront of our curriculum. Ms. Wright explained that ISTE has invited a team of five CSDNB staff members to attend the Course of Mind Program which will equip our staff with the knowledge to evaluate ed tech products before purchasing them. With the amount of educational technology that is available today, it is important to have the tools and knowledge necessary to properly vet purchases needed to enhance our curriculum. The coaching and coursework fees are complimentary and at the end of the practicum the district will become eligible for a \$2,500.00 educational technology stipend.

Discuss Academic Donation, Purchase Orders, and Bid Waivers

Ms. Anderson, Ms. Bohlke, and Ms. Karen Falvey, Principal of Smith Elementary School, spoke briefly about a donation and purchases for the Academics Department.

The Ant with Red Pant Book Donation

Todd Osowski from Rotary told Rotary Club about a book that his dad authored. It has social emotional content and is appropriate for young students. His Dad self-published and has many copies which he has been donating. He will be donating copies to the Media Centers for our Elementary Schools. We have a hard copy of the book to share with the Board as there is not a digital version available online. This book emphasizes the importance of acceptance of individual differences and inclusivity. It aligns nicely with our Elementary SEL curriculum and our work around equity and inclusion.

Ms. Reyes motioned to add acceptance of The Ant with Red Pants book donation to the Consent Agenda for the next regular Board of Education Meeting in June, seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion carried unanimously.

The Curriculum Committee favorably recommended to refer the following academic purchases to the Finance, Facilities, and Transportation Committee for further review at their next meeting:

K-2 Classroom Libraries (New)

In partnership with family and community, the Consolidated School District of New Britain works to provide the best personalized and comprehensive whole-child education so our students will be prepared for, and positively contribute to, a profoundly different future. The Department of Academics is submitting this Board memo for the purchase of Teachers College Reading Writing Project (TCRWP) leveled readers for grades K-2.

When curating the library shelves, Teachers College considered issues of representation and diversity. They understand that all children need and deserve to see themselves represented in the books they find in their classroom. They also know that a single book can unwittingly create a stereotype of an identity, or seem a token inclusion. They strove to provide texts that celebrate multiple perspectives, cultures, histories, and identities. They were careful to supply students with books that are both high quality and high interest. To be considered culturally relevant, literature needs to be authentic, realistic, and maintain a culturally conscious ideology and message. Providing students with literature where they are able to see themselves, their families, and their cultures will give them the opportunity to connect with the literature and find literature that they want to read.

These leveled shelves of books will provide students with independent reading books with the goal of increasing reading stamina, decoding, comprehension, and fluency. Every book is leveled in order to match readers to their independent reading level. The books are a mix of fiction and nonfiction so they will expose students to a range of genres. For example, categories include Wild Weather, Alphabet Books, Concept Books, Songs and Poems, as well as many others. While teachers utilize Foundations to develop letter-name recognition and phonics skills in students, leveled readers will give students an opportunity to apply word attack

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skills in connected text.

The research shows that children need access to books that they can read with high levels of accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Many studies support the need to provide children with books that are matched to them. In addition to student access to many books, personal choice of what to read is another factor for increasing reading motivation and comprehension. Currently, the only leveled readers most students have access to are guided reading books where they read in a small group led by the teacher. These groups meet a few times a week and provide a limited amount of time on task. The leveled readers we are purchasing will be stored in bins where students can easily access them, keep them in a book baggie inside their desk, and reread them on a daily basis. These books can easily be incorporated into centers such as Read-to-Self and Read-to-Someone.

Research also shows that children need enormous amounts of time for reading. Success in reading is directly related to the amount of time a person spends reading. Krashen points out that 93% of the tests on reading comprehension that collect data on volume of reading show that kids who are given more time to read do better (2004). Guthrie and Humanick found that reading volume predicted reading comprehension, and that dramatic increases in reading volume are important for thoughtful literacy proficiencies (2004). Lastly, the NAEP Reading Report Card for the Nation (U.S. Department of Education 1999) showed that at every level, reading more pages at home and at school was associated with higher reading scores. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) reinforce the significance of students reading fiction and nonfiction for pleasure. They assert that engagement in reading, "may substantially compensate for low family income and poor educational background." This purchase will provide a much-needed resource for our students which will ultimately assist in fostering their reading achievement.

Source: A Guide to the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Classroom Libraries

The total is \$353,886.30 and the funding source is Local-Academics Local, Academics, Instructional Supplies, 1010-961-2200-400-000-56110.

LearnZillion 6-8 Illustrative Mathematics (Extension)

In partnership with family and community, the Consolidated School District of New Britain works to provide the best personalized and comprehensive whole-child education so our students will be prepared for, and positively contribute to, a profoundly different future. Our curriculum renewal timeline at the middle school level included Mathematics for the 2021-2022 school year. The foundational resource we have been using since 2019 is Illustrative Mathematics, which is a mathematics curriculum that is highly usable, well-designed and supported. We have been purchasing consumable resources for grade 6-8 to support this curriculum at a cost of about \$50,000. Since the elementary school is coming on board next year with Illustrative Math and will be using the LearnZillion platform to assist in the consistency of implementation at the elementary level, we have decided to do the same for the middle school. The LearnZillion platform has been updated for 2021 to be more interactive and engaging than the prior version, and in addition, will enable our students coming up from Grade 5 to be familiar with the format and navigation of their mathematics resource. This move will allow teachers to focus more on planning and less on creation of resources to utilize in lesson delivery. Since one of our middle schools is considering looping teachers from Grade 7 to Grade 8, this move will also allow for teachers to have access to quality planning resources aligned to their new grade level. The instructional materials for LearnZillion Illustrative Mathematics meet the expectation for alignment to the CCSS and connect the Standards for Mathematical Content and the Standards for Mathematical Practice. Where in the past we have purchased static textbooks that we have utilized for 6 to 12 or more years, we are in a time in education in which textbooks themselves are virtual resources that can be updated and revised in real time. This cost expenditure should be equated to the cost of new textbooks, albeit online and digital, that will last multiple years. The attached quotes detail 1-year, 3-year and 6-year costs so that the decrease in per pupil digital licenses can be seen. We would like to purchase LearnZillion for 6 years, to align with the licenses for K-5.

Our District Strategic Plan demands that we prepare students to positively contribute to a profoundly different future and promote an engaging culture for learning for all staff and students. This future will require students to problem-solve, to devise clever, creative solutions to unique problems, to collaborate around these solutions and to reflect and improve their solutions with feedback. This curriculum includes all of these elements coupled with planned embedded professional development. In selecting this resource to support our middle school mathematics curriculum, we were mindful of several variables. As we have learned in recent months, our students and teachers have become more proficient in accessing digital materials through their Google Classrooms. It was essential that a replacement resource include a robust, easily navigable digital platform that

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communicates fluently with Google Classroom and Clever. In addition, ensuring that extensive supports and scaffolds included for our English learners and our students who require special education services was non-negotiable. LearnZillion 6-8 Illustrative Mathematics was given top ratings by edreports. LearnZillion K-5 Illustrative Mathematics is a comprehensive, flexible curriculum with easy-to-use lesson cards and built-in differentiation. Through inclusive instructional routines, students develop the skills to successfully learn math for life.

The curriculum:

- Was designed by noted mathematician and standards author, William McCallum
- Contains embedded support for culturally responsive pedagogy -Includes digital interactives powered by Geogebra and Desmos
- Builds confidence and growth mindset through productive struggle
- Builds conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application
- Is Classroom- and distance learning-ready, with comprehensive teaching support
- Includes tools for active instruction, effective differentiation, and assessments that empower students
- Includes instructional routines that promote collaborative discourse
- Is a 2020 Tech & Learning Awards of Excellence winner

The attached quotes include a 6-year digital subscription to LearnZillion at \$215,550.00 Comparison quotes include a 3-year digital subscription for \$133,650.00 and 1-year digital subscription for \$66,450.00. These amounts reflect our year 1 cost for either 6 years, 3 years, or 1 year for: Digital Licenses for Teachers and Students, Student Print Consumables (for 1 year), Teacher Print, and Professional Development. The quotes also show the yearly cost for student print consumables for years 2-6 which average \$21,000.00 which is about \$29,000 lower than our average yearly consumable cost of \$50,000 for Kendall Hunt Illustrative Mathematics consumables.

The total is \$215,550.00 and the funding source is Local - Academics Local, Academics, Licenses and Fees - Technology, 1010-961-1000-100-000-55302.

Virtual Consultation in Elementary Literacy by CREC for Smith Elementary School (Revision)

Contract with CREC for an Instructional Coach for NBU planning purposes. The coach will be specifically for Domain 2. We will be front loading the staff with support in dissecting Domain 2 and learning to effectively and efficiently plan using the new curriculum and the workshop model, as well as keeping in mind student centered learning, higher order questions and differentiation. She will support planning with technical support and the use of platforms for effective planning. She will engage staff in deep learning for effective planning and to ensure alignment of instructional and assessment resources. She will work the Plan, Do Study, ACT model into effective planning weekly. The original contract was accepted, this is adding additional hours.

The total is \$45,000 and the funding source is SIG Grant. (\$25,000 already approved 9/4/20).

Closing and Adjournment

Mr. Kane motioned to adjourn at 7:01 PM, seconded by Ms. Reyes. Motion carried unanimously.

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