



CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW BRITAIN

New Britain Board of Education Curriculum Committee Meeting

December 21, 2020 - 7:00 PM | Virtual Meeting

Call to Order and Opening

Dr. Violet Jiménez Sims, Curriculum Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:47 PM.

Board Members Present

Mr. Merrill Gay, Mr. Joseph Listro*, Mr. Nicholas Mercier*, Ms. Diana Reyes*, Dr. Violet Jiménez Sims*

**Committee members*

CSDNB Staff Present

Ms. Amy Anderson, Mr. Antoine Billy, Ms. Lara Bohlke, Mr. Colm Duffin, Mr. Damon Pearce, Ms. Kristin Salerni, Ms. Nancy Sarra, Ms. Jennifer Wright

New Business

Review and Approve Minutes from the Curriculum Committee Meeting on November 16, 2020

There were no recommended changes to the minutes from the Curriculum Committee Meeting on November 16, 2020.

Mr. Mercier motioned to approve the minutes from the Curriculum Committee Meeting on November 16, 2020 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 month of November.

Presentation of Proposed New Courses for New Britain High School

Mr. Antoine Billy, Associate Principal of New Britain High School, and Mr. Colm Duffin, Department Head of Mathematics, presented the following proposed high school courses to Curriculum Committee members for approval:

- Health and Wellness II
 - To address increase in state graduation requirement around Health and Wellness
 - Curriculum to be completed May 2021
- Elementary Algebra (Tunxis Community College Course Math 095)
 - Will provide a waiver of need to enroll in non-credit prerequisite course at Tunxis
 - Curriculum from Tunxis
- Problem-solving
 - Entry level high school math course (Grade 9)
 - Curriculum to be completed May 2021

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The presentation created by Mr. Billy with the help of Mr. Duffin, Mr. David Scott Driscoll (Lead Teacher of Health/Physical Education Department), and Mr. Damon Pearce (NBHS Principal) is attached.

Tentative approval was given by the Curriculum Committee to keeping working on development of the curricula for the proposed courses and bring forward when completed.

New Business

Discuss Academic Purchase Orders and Bid Waivers

Ms. Jennifer Wright, Assistant Coordinator of STEAM & Summer Programming, and Ms. Lara Bohlke spoke briefly about the following purchase orders and bid waivers for the Academics Department:

Minecraft: Education Edition

Minecraft for Education is now available for the Chromebook with a single sign-on option making it easily accessible for students at home or in-school.

Educators in Grades 4-8 will be able to Minecraft: Education Edition to teach a range of subjects, from history and science to sustainability and engineering, and can map lessons directly to specific learning outcomes and curriculum standards. Minecraft: Education Edition helps prepare students for the future workplace, building skills like collaboration, communication, critical thinking and systems thinking. The open learning environment gives students the freedom to experiment, encouraging creative self-expression and problem solving. CSDNB teachers will integrate specific lessons and tasks into existing curriculum to allow students another option to show what they know.

Code Builder is a feature that allows students to learn coding in Minecraft using tools including Code.org, Tynker, Scratch and Microsoft MakeCode. Students can use blocks of code or JavaScript to build and create in Minecraft. Students have had exposure to many of these programming opportunities in their STEAM and Computer Science courses, so students will have a chance to apply what they have learned and strengthen their skills through this application.

Slade Makerspace Furniture

A makerspace is a physical location where students and teachers gather to share resources and knowledge, work on projects, research, and build. Makerspaces provide tools and space in a community environment – and two spaces have been identified as potential makerspaces on the Slade School campus. A makerspace gives students a way to see how problems can be solved and encourages them to find ways to solve issues in a way that they would not see on paper. A student may understand a concept in theory, but when faced with a problem, it can be difficult to figure out how to apply the theory. It is easy to lose a student to lose focus if they spend much of the day sitting in a chair listening to their teacher talk. Makerspace gives them a place to focus on a single idea. When they are solving issues, students no longer have to imagine how that solution occurs. Since they have all of the materials in front of them, it is easier to focus on understanding the concepts and seeing how they apply.

A makerspace offers something that traditional classes are lacking. Shop classes and home economics always included an element very similar to a makerspace, and while students may not have performed correctly, it was much easier to understand concepts and how to apply them. A properly outfitted makerspace provides flexible spaces for students to work in a non-traditional setting, giving students a tactile and kinesthetic experience that shows them how and why a concept works. As the students work through a particular problem, they are encouraged to come up with new and innovative ideas. Ultimately, this helps them to understand better and apply what they have learned. Moveable furniture, alternative seating, workbenches, and carts give students permission to make the space their own while supporting collaboration and problem solving. Whether standing, sitting, students can exercise their creativity without being restricted by their physical environment.

ISTE Certification

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) is the foremost organization in teaching technology in the

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classroom. As a result, ISTE has more than a dozen quality standards for how students, teachers, administrators, coaches, and computer educators should approach technology in the classroom. ISTE educator certification will allow staff from CSDNB to be at the forefront of technology integration. ISTE certification is a competency-based, vendor-neutral certification that focuses on using technology to transform learning in meaningful ways. Knowledge gained through the certification process will build a cohort of CSDNB educators who have the instructional skills to use technology to deepen content learning and build 21st century skills. A CSDNB cohort will help build a capable team of educators ready to implement the ISTE Standards and meet the diverse needs of students to prepare them for a technology-powered future.

1. Teaching with technology skills is critical. The need for educators to possess the skills to effectively leverage technology for learning is undeniable. Whether you've been teaching with technology for decades or are just getting started, the ISTE Conference & Expo offers hundreds of learning opportunities to equip educators with the skills and knowledge necessary for digital age learning.
2. Educators must keep pace with the rate of edtech. Technology is ubiquitous and fast moving and the knowledge and best practices needed to harness it for learning and teaching are continuously evolving. ISTE conference attendees receive a one-of-a-kind opportunity to gain hands-on learning experience with the latest in education technology solutions from hundreds of organizations.
3. Year-round learning built in. Registration to the ISTE conference includes ISTE membership, which means access to year-round learning, use-it-today resources that have been vetted by fellow educators and virtually endless opportunities to build influence by contributing to the field.

Foundations Materials (New and renewal)

In 2020-2021 we began implementing Foundations into 5 elementary schools across the district in grades K-2. Our in-house Foundations coach/trainer is currently, and will continue, training teachers in Foundations with the help of 2 Wilson Level 2 Instructional Coaches.

iReady data suggests that many of our students enter third grade reading below grade level. This program addresses these concerns during the foundational years, K-2, with research based multisensory, explicit and systematic reading instruction. Tier II and III student individual needs are met in small groups by Foundations trained special education and ESL teachers and with the support of literacy tutors.

The attached price quote is for the required resources for teachers at 3 new Foundations schools (Lincoln, Gaffney, Holmes) who will be trained in the 2021-2022 school year and to replenish consumables for the previously trained 6 schools (Smith, Smalley, Jefferson, Vance, TC, Northend). K-2 Sped and EL teachers will also be trained and receive multilevel materials at the 3 new schools. Future board memo will contain a quote for Chamberlain and DiLoreto for resources and materials for implementation in 2021-2022.

BrainPOP (Renewal)

In these uncertain times, we must be prepared to meet our students where they are. We must be equipped to provide our students with varying approaches and explanations of content ranging from Science to English Language Proficiency. Our teachers need a bank of quality, accessible resources and platforms that cross content areas and provide opportunities for students to learn and explore whether we are in-person, in a blended learning (hybrid) environment, or fully using remote learning. These resources should be flexible and searchable by content and topic and be available in multiple languages to support our linguistic diversity and allow for equity of access. We need to be able to do this flexibly, in person and/or virtually. Students browse through or can be assigned BrainPop's library of videos. Upon selecting a topic, a three-to-five minute animated video is played, featuring BrainPop's two animated stars, Tim and Moby. At the conclusion of the video, students have the option to complete a variety of follow-up activities. These activities include quizzes (with multiple choice and open-ended items), interactive games, sorting tasks, concept map creation, vocabulary review, and primary source analysis, among others. All of these activities have built-in functionality that allow students to submit responses to their teacher. In addition to BrainPOP (Grades K-8), BrainPOP Jr. is focused on learners in K-3, while BrainPOP ELL provides supports specifically for English Learners.

BrainPOP offers the following:

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- *Consistency across grade level K-8
- *Common structure K-8 / ELL/BrainPOP Jr.
- *All resources available in Spanish (and French) with BrainPOP Español and BrainPOP Français included
- *Instructional engagement
- *Includes academic vocabulary
- *Includes reading, math, science, social studies, English Language
- *Easily integrates into lessons
- *Integrates with Clever for easy access for students through Google Suite
- *Engaging video component
- *Includes interactive games, sorting tasks, concept map creation, vocabulary review and primary source analysis.
- *Allows a consistent platform to deliver and/or enhance instruction over multiple disciplines
- *Included as part of each video is a link to a related BrainPop Educators page, which offers user-submitted and BrainPop-created lesson plans, printables, and instructional resources.
- *Engaging for students and easy to navigate for teachers, students, and parents.

This quote is for a 3 year renewal. Funding needed for this renewal is available through ESSER at this time. Renewing for three years saves us an estimated \$13,000 and ensures insulation against price increases. Extending the services for a three year renewal is \$116,907.30 and includes professional development for staff.

Feedback from staff has been positive as it provides a wide variety of topics for students to explore through the multimedia platform. It is the fourth most accessed app on Clever for the 2020-2021 school year. In addition, some high school teachers have been able to utilize BrainPOP to give access to chemistry and language topics to newcomers.

Seesaw for Schools (Renewal)

In our remote learning experience from March 13th 2020 to June 2020, we learned that our youngest students (PK-1) and their families found the Google Classroom environment more difficult to navigate.

We purchased Seesaw as a much more user-friendly and developmentally appropriate alternative to Google classroom. It is widely used across Connecticut for primary-aged students. Seesaw fulfills the need to provide our students with an interactive learning platform at their developmental level that is available whether we are in-person, in a blended learning (hybrid) environment, or fully using remote learning. This is easily navigable by students, teachers, and families or caregivers and supports the development of students as independent learners who can express voice and choice for a more personalized learning experience. The platform allows for variance in language, medium of work submission, difference in reading levels, and ease of access to any teacher working with a student throughout the school day. Since its integration with Clever in CSDNB, there have been 1,701 unique student users. It is also the most widely accessed platform for Grades PK-1. Even after the pandemic passes, in our improved CSDNB 1-1 environment, we want to teach students to be technological producers, not simply consumers. Seesaw prioritizes access and learning of our youngest students.

Teachers and students are able to use the platform seamlessly, in person and/or virtually. Seesaw offers the following:

- Designed to support the needs of younger students using Seesaw as a portfolio tool and both in-school and remote learning.
- Collaboration with more co-teachers and specialists per class. Unlimited activities organized by grade level, standard, topic.
- Ability to curate lessons in a personalized Activity Library for your school or district
- Multiple ways for students to turn in work. Sync student work from year-to-year and class-to-class in a single, streamlined portfolio.
- Families remain connected automatically after signing up once Bulk setup;
- Clever integration Schoolwide settings, and centralized support
- See family engagement and usage trends, centrally manage data.
- Ability to align to District curriculum; enable teachers to view student work organized by skill or standard in District or School Activity Library.
- Supports school culture with multimedia school-wide announcements. Webinars / live PD throughout Teachers can audio/video record directions to activities.
- Integrates with Google - ex. Google Meets, Docs, Sheets, Forms, or Slides can be assigned.

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- Translation feature allows teachers and families to translate captions, comments, messages, announcements, or notes.
- Highly engaging for students.
- Gives detailed reports on student use and parent engagement.

The POs are to pay for the next two years of Seesaw access at \$9,194.90 per year.

Pear Deck (Renewal)

Peardeck has provided teachers and students with a tool to collaborate virtually through their Seesaw or Google Classrooms.

‘The Peardeck platform allows teachers to make any presentation interactive so every student can participate right from their own device. Rooted in student engagement, Pear Deck maximizes active learning and provides tools for synchronous and asynchronous lessons. Peardeck can be used whether we are in-person, in a blended learning (hybrid) environment, or fully using remote learning. Peardeck supports the development of students as independent learners who can express voice and choice for a more personalized learning experience. Districts that have implemented Pear Deck report improved outcomes and equity, improved student engagement and achievement, and a more positive school climate and culture.’

Peardeck offers the following:

- *Interactive collaboration with teachers and students.
- *Unlimited activities and assignments organized by grade level, standard, and topic that are interactive with teachers and students.
- *Multiple ways for students to create and submit assignments.
- *Sync of student work from year-to-year and class-to-class in a single, streamlined portfolio.
- *Bulk setup; Clever integration.
- *Alignment with District’s move towards student-centered curriculum and instruction.
- *Teachers can archive work from year to year
- *Webinars / live PD throughout
- *Teachers can audio/video record directions to activities and upload in Peardeck.
- *Integrates with Google (Google Meets, Docs, Sheets, Forms, or Slides can be linked.)
- *Highly engaging for students.
- *See engagement and usage trends.
- *Gives reports on teacher and student use
- *All reports can be viewed at the classroom, building and district level.
- *Student work is private to the teacher and class collaborators.

Peardeck has been particularly well received and utilized by CSDNB staff and students. Since school began, students and teachers have engaged with Peardeck approximately 475,000 times! While the three year renewal cost does not represent a discounted price per year, paying in advance does insulate us against price increases over the next few years.

Mr. Mercier motioned to add all of the academic purchase orders and bid waivers to the Board’s Consent Agenda for the next regular meeting in January with the exception of the ComicsPlus Subscription which does not require a bid waiver or Board approval. This motion was seconded by Mr. Listro. Motion carried unanimously.

Closing and Adjournment

Mr. Mercier motioned to adjourn at 7:38 PM, seconded by Mr. Listro. Motion carried unanimously.

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