

**HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION/SPECIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES**  
**DECEMBER 7TH, 2021 @ 9:15**

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**Board Members Present:** E. Urbanski, Chair | E. Briamonte | L. Zhang | V. Flynn  
**Administrators Present:** J. Charney, Interim Assistant Superintendent| Carolyn Marano, Acting Director of Special Services  
**Meeting Location:** Board Conference Room, Village School

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The committee met in person on Tuesday, December 7th, at 9:15 AM for its Curriculum and Instruction/Special Services Committee Meeting. The following agenda items were discussed.

1. Recommendation for Approval: The committee discussed items recommended by the Interim Superintendent for approval including, but not limited to: Approval of out of district travel for district personnel, field trips, Student teacher/Clinical Practice/Observations/Field Experience, Satz Robotics Club Advisor, Emergency Closing produces, Appointment of before and after school student support for 2021/2022 school year, Submission of CRRSA-ESSER II Grant Fund 2021-22 Amendment and submission of ESSER III Grant Fund, Road Forward: Emergency virtual and remote instruction program, student internship, Graphics art credit, Learning centers during unit lunch at the high school.
2. Special Services: Carolyn Marano presented Special Services recommendations for approval including, but are not limited to: Home/Hospital instruction, Student placement, Revised Community Based Instruction (CBI) and Structured Learning Experience (SLE) for the 2021-2022 school year.
3. Special Services Discussion: Carolyn Marano updated the committee on the SEPAC meeting which took place on December 1st. The meeting was well attended with approximately 45 parents and Ms. LaMoglia, the incoming new Director of Special Services present. A date was set for the next meeting which will be on January 12th. According to code SEPAC is supposed to have 3 meetings a year. Ms Marano addressed the ongoing concern regarding the floating ICR teachers in the science and social studies classes at Village School. Due to the change in schedule approximately 64 students with IEPs have a ICR teacher in Science and Social Studies every other day as opposed to every day. While the IEPs require an ICR teacher every other day, this is different from what was understood by the parents with children with IEPs. Due to an oversight in communication, the district will continue with an ICR teacher everyday for the remainder of this year. The school is addressing this issue with additional staffing starting in the new year.
4. Robotics Club: The robotics club had their first regional competition over Thanksgiving weekend. Ms Flynn asked why the school hasn't invited professional engineers to come and speak about their careers as this is common practice in many neighboring school districts. Dr. Charney will follow up with a request to implement a visiting engineer lecture program for our engineering students.

5. Before & After School Support/ HS Learning Centers: Four teachers will be providing before and after school support for Indian Hill. Three math teachers will be made available to provide daily support during the High School unit lunch. Going forward, learning centers will be made available every period in the HS so students can get on site tutoring during study hall. The district is posting jobs to fill the learning centers at the high school as other than the three, no HS teachers have volunteered to fill these study hall positions. These supports will be funded by the ESSER III Grant. A discussion was held about how we can get students to attend these extra support sessions. Suggestions were made that teachers who have struggling students should be reaching out to both the students and parents to encourage them to attend the Learning Centers. Suggestions were also made that guidance counselors should be proactively reaching out to students and parents as well. District website messaging should also be initiated.
6. Instructional Rounds: Dr. Charney recommended the use of Instructional Rounds as a way to change school culture and pedagogy. The practice involves having a cadre of teachers visiting classrooms with the task of improving teaching. This cognitive apprenticeship is a positive action which creates shared practices and camaraderie amongst teachers.
7. Algebra 2H/Advanced Algebra 2/Other Honors Courses Solutions: Students who transferred from Honors Algebra II to Advanced Algebra II will have 10 points added to their marking period grade if they transferred more than half way through the marking period (Oct 15). Students who transferred to Advanced Algebra II have the opportunity to take make-up tests for the units questioned. Less than thirty percent of students have taken the opportunity to take the makeup tests. There are two teachers working with students in the Algebra classes. Dr. Charney is revising the program of studies and the student handbook so that it clearly states how students' grades are adjusted if they transfer out of an honors course mid semester. Previously there has been no consistent or written policy.
8. Guidance Update: Dr. Charney presented the newly revised 8 objectives for the Guidance Department for the 2021-2022 school year. These objectives include:
  - a. Communications plan to develop a 12 month calendar for all stakeholders.
  - b. College Application process
  - c. Benchmark counselor workload in relationship to other high performing peer districts
  - d. Increase student achievement by monitoring student progress, seeing counselees 4 times a year, handling SEL needs, employing Naviance, and encouraging students to attend Summer Step up
  - e. Participate in 504/I&RS meetings
  - f. Data driven decisions
  - g. Improve student culture and climate
  - h. Build relationship with all stakeholders
9. National Honors Society: After review by the administration, it was determined that no student would be rejected from NHS due solely to the admission essay.

10. Returning Graded Assignments: Dr. Charney shared part of the Highlighter, a staff newsletter given to teachers at the start of the school year in September. Information provided to teachers includes written directives on when to respond to communications and return graded work. The information from the Highlighter is as follows:

**Communication:** respond to emails within **one school day** of its receipt, even if it is only to acknowledge receipt of the email. Emails that are sent over the weekend should be replied to by the end of the school day on Monday. Similarly, staff have an obligation to reach out to a parent if a student is underperforming. We do make available the parent portal of PowerSchool but this is only a tool to support the home and school connection. Teacher communication is best.

**Timely Feedback on Assessments:** staff members have an obligation to provide timely feedback. This includes regular updating of their PowerTeacher gradebook. The following are expected “turn-around” times (which includes POSTING on the gradebook, when applicable):

Minor Assignments (HW – Classwork – Pop Quizzes)	2-3 school days
Minor Assignments (Writing Assignments)	3-5 school days
Major Assignments -- Tests and Quizzes	5-7 school days
Major Assignments - Essays, Lab Reports, Research Projects	8-10 school days

If the teacher does not return the work in this amount of time it is recommended that the parents or student contact that school’s principal.

11. Testing Data: Start Strong Vs. District Measures: Dr. Charney compared the state mandated Start Strong results to the most recent district testing using Linkit and Map assessments. Areas that were of concern in the Start Strong such as 9th grade Algebra showed markedly different results when compared to the Linkit common assessments taken in late October/early November. For example the HS Algebra 1 Start strong results had 64 % needing strong support while the Benchmark testing showed 8% need strong support and the Common Assessment showed that 14% need strong support. All measures do indicate a need for student support since the LinkIT Benchmark and Common Assessment show 38% and 6% respectively meeting or exceeding expectations. The 4th and 5th grade Map and I-ready math results are substantially better( these include Voyager students) than the Start Strong results. It should be noted that the Start Strong assessment measures a deficit model while I-ready, Linkit and MAP measure achievement, meeting and exceeding expectations, approaching and not meeting expectations. Moreover, the Start Strong assessment only had 12 to 18 questions for certain subjects. This low item sample size makes the results questionable because if a student got 4-5 wrong for example on a 12 item test they would fall into a needed support area. The I-ready pilot math program in 4-6 grades, which is a differentiated and adaptive approach to work on all levels, showed promising results. A detailed presentation of student growth will be made in February after the midyear assessments are performed. A link to the detailed data is here: [Testing Data: Start Strong vs. District Measures](#).

Next Meeting Date: Will be made in the new year.