

**Holmdel Township Board of Education**  
**Curriculum & Instruction/Special Services Committee Meeting Notes**  
**January 21 at 9:30 am**

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**Board Members Present:** V. Flynn, Board President | E. Urbanski | E. Briamonte | P. Reddy  
**Administrators Present:** J. Charney, Interim Assistant Superintendent | M. Gill, Director of <sup>of</sup> <sub>SEP</sub> Special Services  
**Meeting Location:** Remote

1. The committee met remotely on Thursday, January 21, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. for its Curriculum and Instruction/Special Services Committee Meeting.
2. The committee discussed items recommended by the Interim Superintendent for approval including, but not limited to, Out of District travel, Staff and professional presenters for February 12 PD Day, “Inner Orbit” Pilot Science and Social Studies program for grades 5-12, Book discard lists, ESSER Funds for 20/21 and 21/22 school years, Donation of books by JCP&L for MLK day, Student Teacher/Clinical practices/Observations/ Field Experience, Revised Testing Dates and Homebound Instruction
3. Unified sports will commence in February. There will be basketball and a new unified cheer program, which was formed through the collaboration of Coach Mendez, Athletics Supervisor Matt Kukoda and Meryl Gill.
4. Meryl Gill presented a review of the Rutgers Consultant Program. The district utilizes one full time therapist and one part time therapist who consult on topics ranging from crisis intervention to helping staff with a program on prevention. The Rutgers program is separate from the school so there is a layer of confidentiality provided to the student. Information is only shared with the school district if there are issues that would fall under crisis protocols. It was explained that while guidance helps students deal with how issues impact education, the Rutgers consultants address the root of the mental health concerns. The majority of students that used these services were in Indian Hill and the High School. It was noted that there is a lot of anxiety for students when they transfer from one school to the next (eg. IH to Satz). There is discussion to create a transfer forum that can target students who exhibit anxiety and school phobia when moving schools. Given the level of stress and anxiety in the student population, a wellness room is being

created in the schools which will be a place for students to “chill out” during study hall, lunch or possibly after school.

5. Meryl Gill presented the S.T.A.R.S. (Students Transition to Adulthood Ready for Success) program, which is an inclusive course for 18-21 year olds. This post-graduate program is designed for students with IEPs who are not following the traditional route and helps to train them to become employable citizens in the community. The S.T.A.R.S. program will be in the 2021-22 Program of Studies as part of the curriculum.
6. Dr. Charney compared the Fall 2019 MAP data to the Fall 2020 MAP data and noted there is a learning loss with reference to projected proficiency in grade 6 Math and grade 3 ELA. For grades 5 and 6, there has been a decline in performance in math. For grades 2 and 6, there has been a decline in performance in ELA. Currently, the district is using CARES money for after school supplemental teaching for students that have been identified. A recent identification of 17 students from Village have been referred to an in-school supplemental program, also funded by CARES. The district hopes to expand this program to K-6. While this has grown organically, the district is applying for an ASSL grant to get funding to create a more formal program for the 20/21 and 21/22 school years.
7. Dr. Charney discussed some benefits of using the Linkit assessments. By utilizing this common assessment program the district is able to track student progress in relation to state standards. Specific skills will be trackable and skill based goals will be set for each individual student. A real value of utilizing Linkit and MAP for common assessments during the pandemic is that we can specifically identify and target learning loss. While the state had mandated to not require SGO for teacher evaluations, the administration informed the teaching staff that SGOs will be measured this year in order for teachers to track student academic progress, a goal set by the Board.
8. In the elementary schools, there is an identified need for a reading specialist (such as a certified Wilson specialist), who can target students with personalized approaches.
9. On January 5, 2021 a letter was sent to parents with students currently taking AP classes. This letter recognized the importance of taking the AP for college readiness and stated that the district would be paying for the student

exam fees. Our students have registered for 788 AP exams which is a substantial increase from 540 exams that were taken by our students last year. Having the district cover the costs for the AP exams makes access to the tests equitable for all students. Dr Charney noted that the AP exam is a more comprehensive review of the subject than the SAT subject area tests. Since SAT subject tests and essays have been cancelled, it is beneficial that so many of our students will be taking the AP exams this year because the colleges will be focusing more on these tests during the college admission process. There has been discussion of adding more AP classes to the curriculum. Two have been added for 2021-22 and another two capstone AP courses are being reviewed.

10. The Inner Orbit pilot program targets grades 5-12 with the aim of improving academic science and social studies vocabulary, thereby improving informational text reading skills and test scores that have been identified through test analysis as lacking. The pilot will be for 5 & 6 grades in the 2021-22 school year with the aim of broadening the range of grades.
11. Dr. Charney invited teachers to submit proposals to make presentations for the February 12th, 2021 PD day.
12. Amendments have been made to the Spring testing calendar for standardized tests required by the NJDOE. In order to minimize testing fatigue Math and English tests are positioned 1-2 weeks apart. The Science NJSLA, which is not required for graduation, has been moved to the end of the testing period.
13. The district has been using the free version of Securly, which filters and blocks inappropriate websites and material on school owned devices while also detecting search activity and site visits that indicate a student may be considering self-harm or harming others. We have upgraded to the paid version which has enhanced alert analysis and service. The upgrade will also mitigate cheating on assessments by blocking tabs that are not related to the assessments given and giving teachers enhanced visual contact with students. This service will be deployed in the next few weeks and a letter will be sent home to parents detailing the services.
14. A discussion about the Naviance college and career software used by guidance took place. There are Naviance services such as Resume builder

and Career Interest profiler that are not being fully utilized by our students. There is a concern that data on Naviance about college acceptances and attendance is not comprehensive or up to date. While Naviance is presently being used for college applications, it has larger applications that should be utilized. There was a discussion on how this software could be used more effectively going forward with possibly having a person from Naviance come in to train.

15. Forty students have applied to test for the ALIRA (Latin) and AAPPL (All other foreign languages) Seal of Biliteracy.
16. Inquiries were made by board members on the status of the Special Services audit. Dr Seitz is in the process of working on setting this up.
17. Report of in person attendance at each school is as follows: Satz 44% IP, Village 59% IP, Indian Hill 50% IP, HHS 30% IP. Holmdel Township school district is one of 77 school districts in the state that are operating in-person full-day.

Next Meeting Date: