

Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting Notes

Monday, August 15, 2011, 9:45 AM

Attending: Board Members - Barbara Garrity, Chiung-Yin Cheng Liu, Phyllis Pascucci
Administrators – Mary Beth Currie, Brian Schillaci, Dionne Ledford

Achieve (Basic Skills) Program, Village and Indian Hill Schools:

Dr. Ledford and Mr. Schillaci gave the committee an update on the Achieve (Basic Skills) Program K-6. Achieve is a comprehensive, individualized supplemental pullout program which offers Language Arts/Literacy support a minimum of 3x/week, and math support a minimum of 2x/week. Services are offered in small group and one-to-one settings.

Children are invited into the program through the Intervention and Referral Services Committee (I&RS), and are usually identified by the classroom teacher. Achieve invitations are based on a child's performance, whether results on routine standardized test, Running Records of reading progress, or classroom observations. Children arrive at kindergarten with a wide variety of exposure to school and/or cultural resources, so no assessments are made until late in the school year. Parents may also initiate an I&RS review through their child's teacher. Classroom intervention is tried first, before a child is offered Achieve's supplemental services. Parental consent is required for Achieve participation.

Achieve begins with a baseline assessment, with progress checked mid-year and at year-end. The Achieve and classroom teachers collaborate with the I&RS committee to decide what support is needed. I&RS committee includes the two teachers, a guidance counselor, and a Child Study Team (CST) member (school psychologist, learning consultant or social worker). Parents are invited too.

Children are pulled out for services, usually during a mix of science, social studies, gym or fine arts classes. To facilitate this, the science and social studies curricula are project-based, and graded pass/fail. Students are only graded on the lessons for which they were present.

Roughly 70-80 Village students (<10%), and about 80 IH students (12%) are in the Achieve program. The number is modestly higher at IH because students who fall in the borderline proficient range on the NJ ASK (200-210) are invited to join the program to consolidate their grasp on "proficient" status. Once children demonstrate consistent, at-grade-level achievement, they are exited from the program. They are monitored for at least 8 weeks afterward to ensure a smooth transition back to the classroom without the supplemental support. Annually about 10% of children successfully exit Achieve, usually after 1-1.5 years in the program. If students remain in the program more than 2 years without making significant progress, they are considered for possible CST evaluation. NOTE: There is also a basic skills program at Satz and HHS, but it wasn't covered at the August C&I meeting.

504 Plans:

Federal law (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act) requires school districts to accommodate students with any "physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities." Failure to accommodate can result in a violation of civil rights complaint. Mrs. Currie is pursuing an opportunity to have Perry Zerkel, a nationally recognized expert in 504 plans, provide professional development for our administration and 504 officers in what the law requires. Because it would cost \$3K per day regardless of the number attending, she is seeking other sponsors to share the cost, and allow the program to be offered to more people. Once trained, our principals would share the training with our teachers.

Mentor Plan:

We discussed mentoring new teachers. Mentors are drawn from the new teacher's academic discipline whenever possible. The annual process of meetings and observations is outlined in our Local Professional Development Plan. We have been handling the mentor program in-house.

The state is revising professional development obligations to include the Professional Learning Communities and self directed learning for teachers. New teacher mentor plans fall within this area. In response we are expanding our mentor plan. The first year would remain much the same as our current program. The second year would add a component of joint training for second year teachers and separate joint training for mentors. Dr. Joe Corriero of Monmouth University would assist with the training. In the third year, the new teachers would complete an action research project that addresses a problem they encountered as a first or second year teacher.

Information Items:

Per Dr. Blaha, who has been working with the College Board this summer, the re-write of AP Biology and AP Chemistry is using an Understanding By Design (UBD) format. She understands UBD will be used in all AP re-writes, which are due for completion by 2014. This approach is consistent with our curriculum writing approach of the past several years.

Items for Approval:

C&I reviewed the following items and recommends their approval:

1. Curriculum Guides

AP French
Graphic Design
Literacy: Reader's Workshop, Gr. 1
Mathematics, Gr. 7
Physical Science with Earth Science
Social Studies, Gr. K
Social Studies, Gr. 1
Social Studies, Gr. 3

2. Donation

On Behalf of Eyes First Vision Center (Dr. and Mrs. Gershenow) would like to make a monetary donation of \$3,400 to our special needs classroom.

Next Meetings:

9:45am, 9/19/2011 (Monday), Central Office Conference Room
9:45am, 10/17/2011 (Monday), HHS Upper Library Conference Room

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Garrity