

Curriculum and Instruction Meeting Notes

February 20, 2008

Present: Barbara Garrity, Ray Tai, Karen Strickland, Barbara Duncan, Mary Beth Currie, Art Albrizio, Bill Loughran, and Rich Katz

Absent: Mary Hartnett

1. High School Scheduling: The high school has two major scheduling problems. They are unable to offer students the courses they need to meet state mandates for graduation without limiting their ability to participate in the music and arts programs and, additionally, 9th period is underutilized and hundreds of students wait around the school for sports to begin. The high school administration in conjunction with the high school faculty has been exploring various scheduling alternatives. It appears that a Rotating Schedule may address the high school problems. This schedule allows students to have 8 classes (an increase from the current 7) but they have only six classes on any one given day. The schedule operates on a 4 day cycle with six academic periods of 58 minutes in length surrounding a "Unit Lunch." On any given day students have three periods before lunch period, when the whole school eats at the same time, and three periods after lunch. The schedule rotates throughout each day so 1st period is not the same class on every day. This can have academic advantages as students do not always attend the same subject matter during their biological "low" times. This schedule has been used successfully for over ten years in other parts of the state most notably in Bergen County. Our administrators and faculty representatives have visited three of these districts and uniformly students and faculty praise the system and noted that they would never want to go back to the 8 short periods one class after the other type schedule. The High School administration will attend one of the next full Board meetings to present their ideas.
2. LEP – results. All students except one met the targets.
3. Learnia Update: Ms. Currie continues to be satisfied with the capabilities of Learnia to help with test taking skill development. Students do practice tests on the computer. Then Learnia identifies strengths and weaknesses, correlates them with the State's Core Curriculum Standards, and identifies areas for instruction. Teachers will receive professional development in using the program. Because of Holmdel's early participation with the program we are entitled to 18 hours of professional development for free from Harcourt/Pearson.
4. Gifted and Talented Update: The Board is receiving an update at our next meeting. Highlights: the identification process will include assessments conducted by parents, teachers, a [test of non-verbal reasoning](#) and a standardized test. [Approximately, Five Percent](#) of the top students will be identified as G/T. The line will be drawn after the test results are in; this means that one year's cut off will be different from another year's cut off. There will be an appeals process. A 1/2 time coordinator will be hired to help Village School teachers differentiate in order to meet [the](#) needs of *clusters* of G/T students into their classes. The expectation is that there will be 2 to 3 classes with the G/T students in them. The first year the program will be available to upcoming 3rd graders. Then one grade will be added each year.
5. There are a number of items for approval:

- A grant from Folger Shakespeare library to conduct an workshop for teachers to present them with techniques and materials to engage students of all ability levels with Shakespeare's plays.
- A request to replace the outdated Spanish textbook. Five Spanish teachers conducted an extensive review of three texts and decided on the Holt, Reinhart, and Winston text. It has a lack of cultural bias, good history of the culture, and includes support for oral and written language.
- Very generous, extensive list of non monetary donations from parent groups.

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 19, 5:30 p.m