

Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting Notes

Wednesday, July 22, 2009, 6:00 PM

Attending: Board Members - Ray Tai, Mary Hartnett, Ana Vander Woude, Michael Collins (by phone)
Administrators - Barbara Duncan, Mary Beth Currie

Dance Team Advisor:

We discussed and approved the creation of a Schedule "B" Dance Team Advisor position and job description. The board received a donation to seed the position for next year. Additional budgeted funds will supplement the donation. Having a Schedule "B" Dance Team will help the board to begin to fulfill the State's requirements that we offer performing arts. The job description will be on the board agenda on July 29th.

Virtual Schools:

The committee began a philosophical discussion of "virtual schools". Currently, some of our students take math courses beyond those offered at the high school from Stanford and Johns Hopkins through a "virtual school" program. The board may wish to expand further into the world of virtual school programs and the discussion will continue with the supervisors of Math and Science as well as Language Arts and Social Studies.

Class of 2009 AP Testing:

We had a significant increase in the number of students taking AP tests last year with positive results. In 2007-2008, 523 students took AP tests and of those 54 did not pass. In 2008-2009, 704 students took AP tests, an increase of 181 tests taken by our students. However, only 60 did not pass an increase of only 6. This was significant positive news.

Valedictorian Changes:

Last year, the committee agreed that, in order to be considered for valedictorian or salutatorian, students in all four years of high school must have earned a minimum of 35 credits each year with an "A" in each course. Prior to this year, seniors only had to earn 30 credits with an "A" in each course, but this led to an unfair advantage given to the senior who decided to give all of their effort to working hard in six out of seven courses. The students who tried hard in all seven courses would then be seemingly penalized for working hard in all courses. However, although we decided to make the change last year, in order to give adequate notice, the board waited until this year to implement it. The committee approved a change to the 2009-2010 calendar to reflect the new policy.

High School Lunch:

Mr. Loughran and Mr. Swensen reported via correspondence to Mrs. Currie that they only had 30 requests to waive out of lunch and that while they would continue to monitor and address the issue; it wasn't as severe a problem as they thought it was at the high school.

Physical Education:

We had a discussion about the physical education department and its curriculum. Mr. Westrol has been meeting with his staff to ensure that there is collaboration by the physical education teachers regarding curriculum, equity and consistency. They met for three days during exams at the high school and it was very productive. Given the effectiveness of the Professional Development, this practice will continue and PE final examination will be imbedded in the regularly scheduled days.

Items for Approval:

1. Curriculum Guides: The Committee approved curriculum guides in the following subjects: Honors Latin Seminar; General Music, Kindergarten; General Music, First Grade; General Music, Second Grade; and General Music, Third Grade. The guides are scheduled to be adopted by the board on July 29th and represent the change that Mrs. Currie and the administration have brought to the way in which curriculum is approached here. Rather than focusing primarily on scope and sequence in writing curriculum, our teachers and administrators are focusing on different ways of working with students to ensure that they have enduring understandings of the essential questions being taught to them.

2. Curriculum Guide Name Change: AP Italian can no longer be offered as an advanced placement course. As a result we will now offer an Honors Italian Seminar. The committee approves of this name change and it is on the July 29th board agenda for approval.

3. Donation: Kevin Theisen, currently a graduate student at Stanford University and a former student of Dr. Josephine Blaha, made a generous donation of two site licenses for ChemDoodle, an organic chemistry drawing program that he wrote. The software supports the high school's organic chemistry class and the committee approved the donation. It will be on the July 29th board agenda.

Next Meeting: 6:00pm, August 19, 2009, Central Office Conference Room.