



Education and Programs Committee Agenda March 25, 2021

Committee Purpose

The Committee provides the School Board with a high-level overview of the educational and extra-curricular programming of the district; acts as a sounding board for various potential changes in programming, while providing a conduit of communication and recommendations back to the full School Board.

Committee Leadership

*Maria Hoover,
Linda Johnston, School Board Committee Chair
Jim Mauer, School Board Committee Chair*

Meeting Started at: 5:00 p.m.

Location: Administration Building Public Board Room

Attendees:

Board Members: Linda Johnston, Jim Mauer

Staff: Tab Musser, Maria Hoover, Mike Bromirski, Jason Hoffman, Kathy Deisley, Jeremy Paul, Jacquelyn Strybos

Time for Public Comment (5-minute limit per Board Policy 903):
NONE

Agenda Items:

Math Program Pilots: Jason Hoffman

- Envision Math, Houghton Mifflin Math, Reveal Math are the three programs selected.
- Teachers have volunteered to pilot each of the programs during the 2021-2022 SY.
- Training sessions will occur over the summer with follow up training happening throughout the school year.
- Information will be shared with teachers and they will inform parents at the beginning of the school year as to which program their student will be using. The material being covered is all the same across programs so all students will receive the same education in each building/grade level in their math classrooms. All programs are aligned to PA Core Standards.

Curriculum Review 2021-2022: Pre-Algebra process: Jason Hoffman

- Jason explained the 6th grade pre-algebra program.
- To determine eligibility, a pre-assessment for 5th graders will be the first step. They will also use Exact Path, and PVAAS data. We will use PSSA scores from Spring 2021, if available. They will have at least 3 data points to use as well as teacher input for decision making.



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- The number of students who participate depends on the students meeting the criteria. Numbers vary across the schools.

Research Pathways: Kathy Deisley

- Kathy shared the book, “Reading the World – Ideas That Matter”, for the new Research Pathways Class (online) class – asynchronously taught by librarians.
- Elective for 10th-12th graders – no pre-requisite.
- The book is a completely digital version with online resources available.
- The idea is to allow students with the interest in doing in-depth research, to have the opportunity to delve deeper into the process.

PA Cyber Schools/Educational Choices Presentation: Mike Bromirski

- Mike provided an update regarding current cyber charter school impact on the district.
- There are two types of cyber schools – brick and mortar (cyber-charter) and strictly virtual – fully cyber. Advertising for cyber and cyber-charter schools give the impression they are free. In fact, parents do not have to pay the cyber or cyber-charter school’s tuition, but the resident district ends up paying as we are billed for their services to our district resident students who attend/participate.
- These entities are exempt from many provisions of the School Code and regulations of the State Board of Education. They can by-pass laws by which public schools are bound and therefore are not held accountable in the same way we are.
- Over the past 10 years, the costs of tuition have tracked upwards. We anticipated a large increase in cyber options during the pandemic and we have seen that increase. Our hope is our students will come back to in-person instruction within our schools. But if they don’t - they want to stay virtual/cyber - the district wants to ensure we have a viable in-district cyber option to offer them.
- Mike shared representation of special ed and regular education costs over the past years.
- Comparing academic performance shows stark contrast between entities.
- The 4-year graduation rate comparison between cyber charter schools versus HSD is concerning. Cyber students are not able to graduate in 4 years at cyber schools.

Achievement Gaps: Mike Bromirski

- Will need to allocate some federal dollars to close the achievement gaps.
- Dr. Musser explained our HAVEN students transitioned at the secondary level smoothly. Maria Hoover explained the elementary HAVEN program did have some bumps and bruises at the start up. Most worked themselves out as the year went on.
- No state assessment waivers were allowed this year. We need to focus more on the diagnostic assessments to develop our plans and processes for closing achievement gaps – not just PSSA scores.



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- We need to be planful with our financial resources, which is one of the reasons we just completed an educational choices survey.

Educational Choices Survey Review: Maria Hoover

- The latest survey information for families of students who chose a virtual option for the 2020-2021 school year indicates most would like to come back to in-person instruction next year.
- Maria sent the survey to elementary families (294 of 600 returned survey) who are not currently in-person or doing synchronous virtual, HAVEN, or home-school options.
- The synchronous option will not continue as it is not sustainable. The virtual model going forward would be asynchronous with synchronous touch points throughout the week. We will be using Hempfield curriculum and assessments with a Hempfield teacher facilitating and monitoring the learning.
- Developing a virtual asynchronous program with district teachers would allow for more close contact with our students, ensuring academic monitoring and a higher chance of success.
- We will use all of the data, looking at different models to determine what our families need.

Equity Work Update: Maria Hoover

- Work Wisdom – moving forward, training for leadership team and leadership team with principals will occur April – August.
- The proposal contains a list of recommended resources.

Future Meeting Dates:

April 29, 2021

May 20, 2021

Meeting Ended: 6:20 p.m.