



# Board of Education COMMITTEE REPORTS

OCTOBER 14, 2021

## Culture, Climate & Community Relations

## Curriculum Committee

***The Culture, Climate & Community Relations Committee met on Tuesday, September 28, 2021, to review 2020-2021 accomplishments and set goals for 2021-2022.***

- 1. Positive Messaging:** The committee reviewed the continued focus on positive messaging in our middle schools, with emphasis placed on including messaging in restroom facilities. In the new school year, this effort will expand to monthly messaging themes for school marquees, in collaboration with Dr. Gray, the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. A second campaign for usage on social media will involve students and be conducted on a quarterly basis, beginning in the second quarter. A positive marketing campaign to promote the District and its accomplishments will be developed for external and internal usage.
- 2. Community Partnerships:** Ms. Pongratz reported on the ongoing partnership with Rutgers DICE, and the positive impact it had on students during remote learning through partnered art projects. The committee agreed to continue to foster this relationship as a second goal, and to also further develop the partnership with Rutgers Business School.
- 3. Wellness and Physical Health:** The committee discussed the award submission for the Wellness and Mental Health brochure produced during the previous year, and updated plans for a hearing awareness event at PHS. The Committee suggested a student-led video series focusing on wellness tips and offering parent/guardian wellness workshops along with supporting materials.

***The Curriculum Committee met on Monday, October 4, 2021 to introduce new curriculum supervisors and detail their areas of focus, to review the progress of the Diversify Our Narrative initiative, and to review classroom instruction practices and professional development plans.***

- 1. Diversify Our Narrative:** Dr. Baskerville reiterated the importance of including student voices in the formulation of curriculum and thanked Ms. Tanis, Hannah Mathew, and all the students for their work to date. Ms. Tanis updated the committee on future plans and resources in place.
- 2. Language Arts Literacy K-12:** Dr. Baskerville welcomed Janine Albanese, Supervisor of ELA K-12/Social Studies 9-12. Ms. Albanese discussed goals for Grades 6-12, outlined lesson structures of the workshop model, and discussed the transition from workshop to high school readiness. Dr. Baskerville outlined focus areas by school level.
- 3. Mathematics 7-12:** Dr. Baskerville introduced Frank Wrublewski, Supervisor of 7-12 Mathematics, who discussed pilot programs in development for grades 7 and 8 and opportunities under review for grades 9-12. The committee discussed the Middle School Computer Science Pilot, and how it would be implemented.
- 4. Start Strong:** Dr. Baskerville reported that this testing window is almost completed and the District will have access to data within a week of close-out.
- 5. Classroom Instruction/Professional Development:** Dr. Baskerville reported that classroom procedures are going well, with small group instruction following all safety procedures. The Pathways to Biliteracy program will expand to assess the proficiency of eighth graders, and ensure all who are eligible are on the path to receive this distinction. Departmental Professional Development planning is underway for November 2. To address learning loss experienced by some students during the past year, K-12 remediation programs will begin in October, five months

## Fiscal Planning & Operations Committee

*The Fiscal Planning & Operations Committee met on Wednesday, October 6, 2021, to review the 2020-2021 Audit, ESIP, transportation and food service updates, referendum planning, and Business Office projects and updates.*

1. **2020-2021 Audit:** Mr. Oliveira reported the auditors completed their field work with no anticipated findings.
2. **Generator Replacement Project:** Due to delays in funding authorization from the NJ Legislature, this project needed to be rebid with contract award anticipated on October 14.
3. **Energy Savings Improvement Program (ESIP) Update:** The DOE approved the Solar PPA applications and all building permits have been approved. Installation will begin in phases later this fall. DOE submissions for Honeywell projects were submitted; Honeywell is preparing bid documents.
4. **Referendum Presentation:** Spiegle Architectural Group will review the Referendum Presentation with the full Board and the public on October 14, 2021. If the Board supports the referendum, Spiegle will begin the next phase of the project, submitting applications to the DOE, and planning will continue for an anticipated September 2022 vote.
5. **Transportation Update:** Mr. Oliveira reported information regarding electric buses and limited funding opportunities. He continues to explore all options for the District. Mr. Oliveira further reported that despite the nationwide shortage of bus drivers, Piscataway's school opening went fairly well, with all routes covered and now operating within time schedules. The District will consider options to ensure busing continues as scheduled, including retention bonuses for drivers.
6. **Food Services:** District administration continues to push for the completion of School Nutrition applications. The current free and reduced student percentage remains below pre-COVID levels, which will negatively impact state aid.
8. **Business Office Update:** Other than the loss of 16 buses, 12 of which were slated for disposal, the District did not suffer significant damage from Hurricane Ida. The new preschool building at 275 Old New Brunswick Road opened successfully. The Wellness Committee is exploring new ideas for employee wellness, and launched free access to the Calm app for one year for all staff.

## Policy/Legislative Committee

*The Policy/Legislative Committee met on Thursday, October 7, to discuss policies regarding vaccines and testing, surrogate parents, homeless students, crisis situations, and nutrition programs.*

1. **Policy 1648.13:** The Committee reviewed proposed Policy 1648.13, implementing the vaccinate-or-test mandate of Executive Order 253. Mr. Rubin reported that the district is strictly complying with the Governor's directive and staff have been notified of the consequences of non-compliance.
2. **Policy 2467:** The committee reviewed an update to Policy 2467 regarding surrogate parents, substituting the term "resource family" for "foster" parents, and making several other minor substantive changes to reflect revisions to the applicable laws.
3. **Policies 5116, 8420, and 8450:** The Committee reviewed policy updates to incorporate changes made to the governing laws since these policies were initially adopted: Policy 5116 concerning education of homeless students; Policy 8420 regarding emergency and crisis situations; and Policy 8540 regulating school nutrition programs
4. **First Reading:** All proposed policies and updates were approved for placement on the Board of Education for First Reading with several revisions proposed by the Administration.
5. **Legislative Developments:** Mr. Rubin updated the Committee on legislative developments, including two new bills recently signed into law: Assembly Bill A970 creating a grant program to fund mental health screenings for students in grades 7-12; and Assembly Bill 1625 authorizes a new program to increase representation of young women and minorities in STEM degree programs and careers.