



Board of Education COMMITTEE REPORT

April 6, 2023

Culture, Climate & Community Relations

The Culture, Climate, and Community Relations Committee met on March 21, 2023, to discuss positive messaging, community partnerships, and wellness services.

Positive Messaging

- Positive messaging displays on school marquees were discussed, including themes of Black History Month, Women’s History Month, and student achievements.
- Student-to-student mentoring videos about AP courses and the D wing were shared.
- An updated marketing brochure was shared, posted online, and will be shared with the school community, and with companies and organizations in the area.

Community Partnerships

- The mentoring program with the Rutgers Business School is under way. The Rutgers business students interact with students enrolled in the Business Academy.
- The National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) Jr. Club students had a car-building competition and will introduce NSBE Jr. to students in the middle school STEM Club. They also plan to visit the Rutgers School of Engineering by the end of the school year.
- Dr. Gray attended a community connections breakfast that was sponsored by Rutgers Division of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement and continues to make valuable connections for Piscataway.
- On January 20, 30 high school students participated in “Diversity in STEM” virtual workshops for Piscataway hosted by Jersey Cares. On February 15, 16 students from each of our middle schools took part in a Black History Month trivia workshop.

Wellness Services

- A letter and survey will be sent to the community and will be available in multiple languages about delayed start times.
- A Haven parent workshop was held on February 2, 2023. Resources are now available on the district website from the workshop.

In new business, committee meeting start times will now move to 7 p.m.

Fiscal Planning & Operations

The Fiscal Planning and Operations Committee met on April 5, 2023, to discuss the 2023-2024 budget, the 2021-2022 audit, capital projects, and more.

2021-2022 Audit

- Dave Gannon from PKF O’Connor Davies will present the audit report to the full Board at the April 6 Board meeting. Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting application for fiscal year 2022 has been submitted.

2023-2024 Budget

- The County approved the tentative budget. The budget will be advertised before the Public Hearing on April 27. Work on the 2023-2024 Budget Book is ongoing.
- The Committee discussed Senate Bill S3732 that provides supplemental stabilization aid to districts that lost state aid for fiscal 2023-2024. The Committee agreed that the additional aid will be used to fund expenses currently in the budget.
- The Committee discussed and approved several changes to the 2023-2024 budget that will be included in the budget adoption resolution on April 27, 2023.

Facility Capital Projects

- Generators – Fence installation is ongoing. The startup and manufacturer training are scheduled for April 17-20.
- HVAC Upgrades #1 – H&S Mechanical will have contractors at Knollwood and Randolphville over Spring Break to install all of the unit ventilators and casework.
- NJSDA ROD Grants – ADA Toilet Room upgrade project applications have been submitted to NJDOE.
- Water Cooler replacements – The District has received a quote for water fountains and will be seeking approval of their purchase at the April 6 Board meeting. Installation services will be bid.
- Paving Projects – Projects planned for this summer include: playground seal coat and striping at Arbor; concrete replacement at Conackamack; side parking lot repaving at Grandview; side lot repaving and concrete replacement at Quibbletown; and driveway repaving and sidewalk addition at Schor.
- 5-year Capital Project Plan – Mr. Oliveira suggested that the plan be reviewed with the full Board at the May 2023 Board meeting.

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Fiscal Planning & Operations - *Continued*

Energy Savings Improvement Program (ESIP)

- Mr. Oliveira reviewed the Spring Break work schedule with the Committee.

Professional Services

- RFPs were issued for insurance broker services for both Medical and Risk/Property-Casualty insurance with a due date of April 18, 2023.

Transportation

- Subscription busing applications for 2023-2024 opened on April 3 at the new rate of \$500.

New Jersey School Business Legislative Update

- Dr. Connors and Mr. Oliveira discussed A5060, a bill that would expand the definition of "sick leave" to include days such as bereavement, care for relatives, children's school conferences, and others.

Business Office

- Investment Account – A 90-day term investment was purchased for \$15 million on March 10 with an interest rate of 4.88%. The Committee reviewed the NJARM statement.
- NJSIG Safety Grant – Piscataway BOE's safety grant this year is \$17,305 down from last year's amount of \$40,501. NJSIG has requested approval to return \$2.5 million in surplus to members with no strings attached, which should help to cover the lower safety grant amount.

Curriculum

The Curriculum Committee met on April 3, 2023, to discuss physical education opt-out plans, summer programs, curriculum updates, and more.

Physical Education Opt-Out: Dr. Baskerville explained that parents will be able to opt out of Specific Comprehensive Health and PE Lessons May 15-19. Lessons will cover personal growth and development including puberty (Grade 5) and social/sexual health (Grade 8). Teachers were trained during in-service sessions on the topics and questioning techniques; Dr. Baskerville thanked Ms. Schick-Myatt and the teachers for their work. A letter will go out to the community following Spring Break outlining the opt-out procedure in Genesis.

Standardized Testing: Dr. Baskerville reported that Piscataway High School completed the NJGPA assessment and ESL Access testing. The state will no longer require the Start Strong Assessment.

Summer Programs: Registration is open for academic assistance for Grades PreK-8 during the summer. Dr. Baskerville said the program will run in the mornings from July 3 to August 10 at Grandview and Schor. Academic enrichment will be available for Grades 5-11 for accelerated courses. Information has been sent out to qualifying students.

Go Math: There is an updated version of Go Math for elementary students. Ms. Dayton explained that it will provide resources we currently have plus supplements and specific support for our diverse student population. Coaches and Ms. Dayton will be trained. There will be three online sessions over the summer for teachers to attend for training. Ms. Corradino asked if teachers would be compensated for their time, and Ms. Dayton confirmed they would be.

Go Math will also work with teachers in the fall at in-service days and after-school meetings. Ms. Cherry asked about the November in-service session, and Ms. Dayton said it would be a check-in for support and a chance for teachers to work with the Waggle program and incorporate it into instruction. Teachers will still have consumable books as well as manipulatives.

Enhancing Literacy Practices: Ms. Albanese said many parents ask "What happens next?" in regards to the English Language Arts curriculum. Literacy work is ongoing and the department is always looking to enhance what it is doing. She discussed skills-based and thematic curricular units, and said literacy planning is always responding to the world. Ms. Corradino suggested that teachers be encouraged to step out of their comfort zone and try new works. Ms. Albanese said that is the direction the department is heading. Ms. Corradino commended the department on its vision. Ms. Scotto spoke about the great experiences she had when teachers share literature and film adaptations they were passionate about. Ms. Lieberman suggested incorporating the theme of transition with a possible writing activity to connect younger student with older students in their transition.

AP Physics 1 Textbook: College Physics is being adopted as the textbook for the AP Physics Course. It is a college-level laboratory-based course that integrates exam prep with AP skill building for the exam in May.